

Interview With President Zia-ul Haq

SUNDAY



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

M.J. AKBAR
REPORTS FROM
PAKISTAN

President Zia-ul Haq

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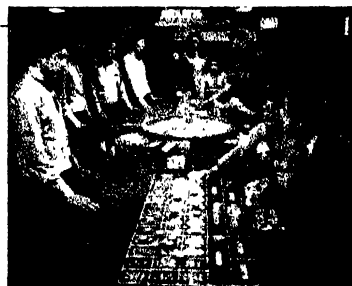
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SUNDAY

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Land of the Gods

Right on the roof of the world where borders of India, Nepal, Afghanistan, China and Russia meet are sources of mighty rivers that flow outwards the four points of the compass: four flow northwards through Russia to the Arctic Ocean; two eastwards through China into the Pacific; two westwards through Afghanistan to the lakes; and the rest including the Indus, Punjab's five, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra southwards through the sub-continent into the Indian Ocean. The snow-clad mountainous region which gives birth to these four river systems was known to our ancients as *Chaturdvipa* and represented as a four-leafed lotus. It was the abode of Gods. The shapes of its mountains inspired temple architecture; its frozen cascades of ice and snow were assumed to be divinely designed *lingams* and *ganapatis* (e.g. at Amarnath).

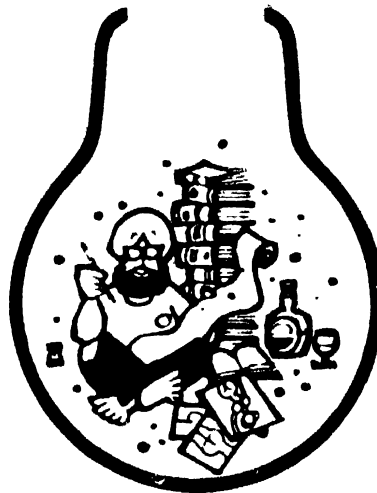
Our forefathers composed religious poetry on different aspects of Himavnt; the present generation try to capture its beauty on canvas and colour films. The latest addition to the large number of picture books on the theme is *The Himalaya: Kailash Mansarovar* by a man and wife photographer-writer team of Rommel and Sadhana Verma. The pictures are exquisite and reproductions of the best Swiss quality. But what distinguishes this pictorial from others on the same subject is the text which cites the Vedas and Sanskrit classics to establish why this region was considered as an ascent to the Divine. Lines of the *Atharva Veda* echo the longing for union with this nature's most magnificent phenomenon:

"O Mother, auspicious be thy wood land,
Thy snow-clad mountains and thy ever running streams
May the Earth pour out her milk for us,
A mother unto me, her son."

Corrupt Man

As a matter of fact he is the cleanest of men who has made muck-raking his speciality. What he really does is to study methods different governments adopt to counter corrupt practices in the bureaucracy.

I have known Leslie Palmier for over a quarter of a century as an academic of distinction. The last time he was in Delhi he told me that



he was doing field research for a book on corruption. "You have come to the right place," I told him. "You name the corrupt practice, we have it. That's one thing no one can teach us anything about. We are the world champions." Palmier smiled as he replied, "Every Indian says that. It is simply not true. Let me tell you, India is far from being the world's corruptest society. In this respect your neighbours outshine you. And your bribe-takers and givers have a lot to learn from Indonesians."

Leslie Palmier's book, *The Control of Bureaucratic Corruption* (Allied) has just been released. It deals with India, Hong Kong and Indonesia. It has more on India than on the other

two countries because Palmier is less concerned with devious forms of greasing the Babu Sahib's palm and more with what these governments have done to prevent it, bring the corrupt to book and punish them. Indian has quite a network of vigilance agencies and laws to deal with corrupt practices. His conclusion about India is both surprising and pleasant. He believes that despite the vast expansion of public sector enterprises, corruption among higher officials who control these organisations has been contained. I wonder if he would have come to a different conclusion had he seen the video-cassette tape showing senior police officials, magistrates, and retired judges of Bombay being entertained by notorious racketeers.

Gulabi Angrezi

A Punjabi matron emigrated to England taking her only son with her. She took to the country like a duck to water. But her boy missed his village and began to waste away. Ultimately the lady took the boy to the local doctor for a medical check-up.

"Does the boy eat well and sleep well?" asked the medico.

The lady replied in her *Gulabi* English. "Na, na doctor sahib. Na eatda, na saleepda, but weepda hee weepda."

Contributed by H.S. "Rattan"



A devotee takes a holy dip in the icy waters of Manas Sarovar

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Murree On a clear day you can see Kashmir for ever. To the east lies the exquisite vale—the road winds downhill between the green slopes to Muzaffarabad then across the dancing Jhelum over the bridge and into the Kashmir of the Abdullahs and the Nehrus. On the western curve of the Murree hill is Pindi Point from where you can see a range melt abruptly away into the flat fertile plains of the Punjab which will remain undisturbed until once again the land weeps up again into the air at the Sulaiman Range and the Hindu Kush on the border of Afghanistan. Kashmir Point is on the east and as you enter this arc on the road the brown of the rocky foothills is suddenly lost in the majesty of snow-capped ranges that sweep across the horizon to Gilgit and the Himalayas and enclose within their fold one of God's finest gifts to men. Gangotri, Choti Pir Kanthi, Pandu Pahar, Skand Bhadri. There is the resonance of centuries in these names which have survived the vicissitudes of human caprice, passion, pride, terror, ambition, faith, anger. There is a history which stirs in the unconscious of the tall handsome Kashmiri who slowly overcomes his reticence and after a little cajoling, spins out these names to a stranger. Maybe he did not want to be reminded of these names but then they came out with a growing smile of pleasure, warming his face and creasing his eye. There is a great deal to remind you of Kashmir in Murree, from the continual encounter with the unmistakable Kashmiri features on face after face to the occasional slogan of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front daubed on the walls. These are the more mundane reminders. The magic of the valley begins at the point named after it. You stand in view of glistening peaks and there is the soft music of the wind playing with the chinar and the green valley rolls away as gently as the temperament of the Kashmiri waiting to be conquered by laughter and shy love.

But a jagged scar now runs through the body of Kashmir and mines have been laid across its heart. And the generations which dreamt of song and freedom from kings to governors-general—the generations which lived in the escalating vision of the *sutis* imagination rather than the narrow paths of the bigot's tunnel must watch helplessly as the poison slowly slowly hardens the veins.

I am writing this at Lintotts, the tea and tuck shop which measures its age in eras—pre and post British. It was at Lintotts that the Unionist Prime Minister of undivided Punjab courted arrest in protest against Indians and dogs being admitted on the premises; the dogs are still kept out according to reliable sources. Murree is an excellent example of the fact that once the British got an idea about anything they immediately shifted their limited resources of imagination to other quarters. Someone designed the first hill station and then they copied it everywhere from east to west to north to south. The Mall was laid and then the need of the community were served albeit under mildly differing names: Lintotts instead of Kevensters but the same windowpanes and the same creamy melting cakes made just the way the memsahib ordered Cecil Hotel, The Holy Trinity Church, Lady Roberts House. They could be in Simla or Darjeeling or Mussoorie.

Of course there is the change wrought by time. The Mall is now called Jinnah Road. Beside Lintotts Sam, equipped with Krypton Video Games, makes a bid for business quite unable or unwilling to hide the upstart in him. Lintotts steadfastly refuses to allow the spurious into its environment. The British may have left Lintotts but why should Lintotts leave the British? This is the world of elegant cane chairs, white walls soaking sunshine, fresh dairy milk cakes laid out in an old polished wood and glass counter, starched white napkins and tablecloth, short evergreens in large dark red pots and Lun

ches and Dinners written on the glass panes of the dining room in sloping old-fashioned italics. The world outside is welcome to change if it so desires. Lintotts has its preferences.

Cyril Radcliffe's scalpel searched and wounded so much but one thing which has not been partitioned as yet is the subcontinental commitment to Bombay's cinema and Hindi film songs. The music shops of Murree are stocked with pirated cassettes of Usha Mangeshkar, Mohammad Rafi, Mukesh and a host of less deserving names. The hits of 1985 are already doing good business and popular music programmes on Srinagar radio of course have an enthusiastic audience. I could therefore hardly resist the temptation of checking (not only in Murree but in Karachi and Islamabad and Lahore as well) as to who would have won if Amitabh Bachchan had contested H.N. Bahuguna in the National Assembly elections of Pakistan. You are right, Amitabh would have won in Pakistan too.

Indian filmstars of course have an audience in Pakistan which its politicians might envy. And it seems that relations between the filmstars and our western neighbour are proceeding at a faster pace than those between Delhi and Islamabad. One recent headline in a Karachi evening paper *Star* reported that Salma Agha is going to play Nusrat Bhutto in a television film about the Bhuttos—with, incidentally, Jack Nicholson as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. I can't vouch for the accuracy of the story, but I can vouch for the imaginative strength of the idea. Only the extraordinary capabilities of Jack Nicholson (from *One flew over the cuckoo's nest* to *The Postman*) could even begin to hope to portray Bhutto. And we should be thankful that no one suggested Shatrughan Sinha for the role. The idea is not as far fetched as it might seem at first glance. Our superstar from Bihar achieved a diplomatic coup of sorts when he had a long meeting not only with General Zia but also with his family. And he is believed to have signed on for three Pakistani films, much to the anger of the local stars who are not exactly crowded with roles. Well, someone has to pick up the tab for Bombay-Islamabad friendship.

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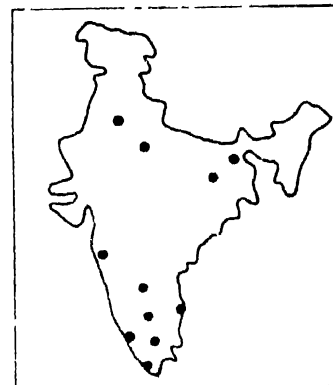
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Against Controlled Media

The minister for information and broadcasting V N Gadgil's bizarre theory that the police had waged war on the press in Ahmedabad to 'punish' it for its 'crimes' can have only one explanation: he is either a devout follower of Goebbels or contrary to what his portfolio suggests a very misinformed minister. The press, he said in his address to the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, had given "distorted and one-sided news" of the anti-reservation riots—as if that was reason enough for the police attacks on newspaper offices, reporters and photographers. And it is strange that he had not uttered a word of regret, much less condemnation, about how the police and their hired *goondas* had ransacked the office of the state's leading daily *Gujarat Samachar*.

For the minister's information when the *Gujarat Samachar* building was set on fire by the police, the chief editor's wife and children were inside and had to be rescued by the fire brigade. And the printing press would have probably escaped total destruction if the fire brigade had not been threatened and told not to put out the fire.

The hostility of the state chief minister, Madhavsingh Solanki, to *Gujarat Samachar* dates back to the days when the paper had campaigned against the construction of another stadium in Ahmedabad. The two persons behind the project were Solanki's friends: Murgesh and his wife, who were subsequently detained for allegedly trying to smuggle lakhs of rupees worth of foreign exchange out of the country. The chief minister then stopped giving government advertisements to the paper.

I wish Gadgil had been slightly objective in his assessment of the conduct of the press. In fact, Solanki would like everyone to believe that the press is responsible for what happened in Ahmedabad. He probably has the same alibi for the rioting in Baroda, Surat and other parts of Gujarat. Could the similarity in the pronouncements of Gadgil and Solanki be due to the fact that they both belong to the same party? Even more ominous is Gadgil's statement that the press, electronic media and communicators should play their "assigned role" within the parameters of a comprehensive national communication policy. What a democracy needs is a free press and if the press is to have an "assigned role" it cannot be free.

Gadgil's statement raises several questions: Who will frame the communication policy? Parliament? That would only mean frequent changes in policy, with each change in the composition of Parliament. If the majority in the next Parliament is of a different hue, it might well frame another policy or abandon the idea altogether. And what will such a policy spell out? Will it say how reporting is to be done or what headline

should go above which report or what types of views can be expressed in articles and in what manner?

Gadgil says, "Many of our journalists consider it smart to indicate the popular western definition of bad news and are bored by constructive and development activities." This is significant, it means that Gadgil's policy will say that a press note issued by a government department on 'development activities' is a must for newspapers and journals. Naturally, if a paper were to challenge what is claimed in that press note or decides not to publish it because it appears to give a false picture, it would be betraying its bias against development activities and so would be liable to be punished.

We seem to be going back to the day, when Mrs Gandhi said that those who did not have a 'commitment' were acting against the interests of the country. Some journalists were then described as 'progressive' because they were pro government.

Gadgil's argument that the opposition which some papers try to represent is answerable to the people once in five years while the press is not also shows how misinformed he is. The fact is that a newspaper is answerable to the people every day; its readers can stop buying it if they find that the news given in it is long and uninteresting, unreliable. As a reader, I have cancelled my subscription to a newspaper, even though I have no power to recall the paper until the five-year term has ended.

True, some journalists do misuse the freedom of the press, but the overwhelming majority of them do not. The Indian press is, by and large, responsible and inferior to none. The Press Council is there to judge any act of omission or commission by newspapers and journalists. The disadvantages of putting the press in a straitjacket are far more than the advantages that Gadgil and his ilk see. In a democracy the press has an important role to play and the entire edifice will crumble if the freedom of the press is in any way restricted. In fact, there is a case for freeing Akarshani and Doodhasthani from the control of the government. Not only, on the electronic media propagate the ruling party's point of view, they also fail to report what is happening in the country. Take the happenings in Gujarat: both AIR and Doodhasthani have failed to inform the people correctly. The government may feel satisfied that their 'constructive and positive approach' is in the interest of the country. But credibility has been the biggest casualty. And whatever Gadgil might say, the press inspires far more confidence among the people than he and all the government channels of information and propaganda put together.

Who will frame the communication policy? Parliament? That would only mean frequent changes in policy, with each change in the composition of the Parliament. And what will such a policy spell out? Will it say how reporting is to be done or what headline should go above which report or what types of views can be expressed in articles and in what manner?

Motivated Slander

This has reference to Balraj Madhok's letter in response to M J Akbar's article *The Spreading Kesar* (Opinion 28 April-4 May). It is easy to fathom what prompted Mr Madhok to vent his spleen on M J Akbar. For civilised Indians like Mr Akbar cannot be bullied or black mailed into subserving his gruesome theory expressed in his book written two years ago, that 'India is a Hindu Rashtra' and that 'only those who have sold their souls for Muslim votes for temporary personal and partisan gains can shut their eyes to the lasting gains and advantages of accepting the reality of India being a Hindu country'. It is time society woke up to the fact that the lunatic fringe of Indian politics, to which Mr Madhok belongs, is spreading rather alarmingly.

Bhola Chatterjee Calcutta

Brilliant Exposure

I congratulate SUNDAY for the brilliant exposure of the murky land deal of the wife and son of the Chief Justice of India V V Chandrachud (*The Courtroom Plot* 21-27 April). This is by no means an isolated instance of self aggrandisement. Mr Chandrachud was one of the beneficiaries of A R Antulay's largesse in the Backbay Reclamation Scheme, Bombay, and more recently was the recipient of a Maruti car from the manufacturers' discretionary quota. If the very fountain of justice gets polluted it is not idle to expect justice. In any democracy a judge who indulges in such practices would have been forced to quit but it is a tribute to our magnanimity that Mr Chandrachud will be allowed to superannuate honourably in June this year.

D C Saxena Bhutinda

Love and Sex

The *Cloistered Passion of Radha and Krishna* (21-27 April) illuminated the philosophic erotic poetic and the practical aspects of sexual love. The authors have exploded the myth that Hindu psychology affords and built a sound and healthy and sex neutral culture for the Hindu Radhas and Kishnas. The excitement is absent in modern lovers. Winning the heart of someone else's wife is the greatest achievement of a man.

Anwar Alam Qumaspuri Patna



A Grave Concern

Sunday has once again played an important role by highlighting a grave issue—the pollution of the Ganga (*The Polluted Ganga From Eternity to Here* 21-27 April). I hope the Central Ganga Authority draws up a concrete plan of action to tackle the problem.

Rashmee Roshan Lall Meerut

• The cover story was exhaustive. It is indeed a paradox that we misuse a river we consider sacred. Unless pilgrims realise the gravity of the situation the holy Ganga will soon become a filthy sewer.

Prahlad Ghosh Calcutta

• A lot of pains must have been taken to compile the lucid cover story. It is a matter of regret that no planned effort was taken during the last 35 years to control the pollution of the Ganga. However, I was relieved to learn that the Central Ganga Authority has drawn up a plan of action. The State Pollution Control Board is also doing a commendable job in this field. But their efforts will not be of much help unless the people realise how important it is to keep the Ganga clean.

Shyamal Gupta Burdwan

• Whatever steps the government might take to clean up the Ganges, it will never cease to get polluted unless and until the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims stop misusing the river. Moreover, it is widely believed that corpses thrown into the

river swim to heaven. It is a shameless practice and unless this is stopped by law, the sacred Ganga will continue to get polluted.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• It is a pity that the most sacred of the Indian rivers is also the most polluted. But it was heartening to learn that plans have been drawn up to meet the threat.

V N Narayanaswamy, Madras

More on Ahmedias

It appears from *The Tragedy of Pakistan's Ahmedias* (Exclusive 31 March-6 April) that Kuldip Nayar is not aware of the faith of the Ahmedias. Ahmedias are the followers of Mirza Gholam Qadiani and they regard the non-Ahmedias as *kafirs*. They do not regard Hazrat Mohammad as the last prophet and they give preference to Qadian over Mecca and Medina. They are not Muslims; they resemble the Bahais of Iran.

Rizwan Alam Calcutta

• The Hindu religion permits every individual to worship as many Gods as he likes. Even non-believers like the communists are regarded as Hindus. But Islam is rigid in the matter of faith. The Ahmedias are not Muslims because they regard Mirza Gholam Ahmed Qadiani as a messenger of God. Moreover, the Kalima of the Muslims quoted by Kuldip Nayar is wrong. It is *La Ilaha Illaallah Mohammdar Rasoolullah*.

M Alyasa Calcutta

• I was under the impression that Kuldip Nayar was a well-read and well-informed person, especially about Islam and the Muslims. But his write-up on the plight of the Ahmedias in Pakistan disappointed me. Mr Nayar should know that mere recitation or wearing the badge of Kalima does not make one a Muslim. A devout Muslim, among other things, believes in one God (Allah), and accepts Mohammed as the prophet. Anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of Mirza Gholam Ahmed and the Ahmedias is aware that the Ahmedias do not believe that Prophet Mohammed is the last messenger of God on earth. They also consider Mirza Gholam as a prophet. Hence Ahmedias are not Muslims. They have no right to call their place of worship a mosque. SUNDAY should stop publishing such ill-researched pieces which are bound to cause confusion in the minds of the Muslims.

Md Shahid Bangalore

The Unholy Nexus

I admire the courage displayed by SUNDAY and Sankarshan Thakur in exposing the murky side of Indian politics (*The Underworld of Indian Politics*, 3-9 March). It was indeed disturbing to know that criminals represent us in Parliament. One wonders how politicians talk of democracy when muscle power seems to be the rule of the day. A determined and courageous step is needed to cleanse politics. Only then can one talk of morality in public life.
Benu Gupta Barphai (Assam)

• It was evident from the investigative report that most social crimes are committed with the active connivance of the politicians in power. Varadarajans and Bakhtas are protected by the police and the politicians.
K Jayaram Bangalore

• It is an open secret that a lot of black money is spent during elections both by the ruling and the opposition parties. It is also a truth that politicians patronise criminals to remain in power and win elections. Hence, one should not be surprised at Hari Mastan's remark. *Politics*

Mein Sab Chor Hain. He at least has the courage to admit the truth.
K Varadarajan, Bangalore

• SUNDAY did a great service to the nation by exposing the criminals who parade around in the garb of politicians. I was shocked to read that a number of persons with criminal records contested and won in the recent parliamentary elections.
B G Mahapatra, Roukela

• SUNDAY should stop publishing interviews of persons like Hari Mastan who had the audacity of criticising not only the Prime Minister but also Mahatma Gandhi. The interview smacked of communalism.
Synthia Carvalho, Navchim (Goa)

• The interview with Hari Mastan was provocative. Most of the *shams* recited by Mastan during the conversation were thoroughly communal. It should have been edited before publication.
Anil Mitra, Port Blair

• I did not appreciate Hari Mastan's picture on the cover. Anti-social elements should not be made heroes.
K L R Prabhu, Udupi

Our Popular TV Serials

The issue devoted to advertising was informative (1985 *The Year of the Ad*, 14-20 April). However, I would like to comment on the article Doordarshan's *Money spinners*. As far as TV programmes are concerned, I feel that a number of manufacturers are unnecessarily exhausting their funds by investing in lacklustre programmes produced and conceived by Doordarshan. The number of privately sponsored programmes being limited, the manufacturers in a bid to cash in on the advertisement boom have, perhaps, decided to sponsor Doordarshan's programmes. By doing this, the producers have taken big risks since the quality of a programme has a major role to play in attracting the attention of the buyer. If Doordarshan cannot allot more time for privately produced programmes, it should improve the quality of its own programmes especially when so much money of the sponsors is at stake.

Vinod Kumar Nayak, Cannanore

• The report on Hindi TV serials made interesting reading. Only till recently were we dependent on the foreign serials for entertainment. But the well produced Hindi serials have successfully replaced them and

some like *Humlog* is even more popular than *Lucy* or *Sorry*.
Prabodh Govind, New Delhi

• The 'home made' TV serials are more popular than the BBC serials because they deal with typical Indian situations. The Indian viewer is more at home with *Lallu* than *Lucy*.
M H Rama, Bhubaneswar

• The advertisement boom has invaded Doordarshan much to the delight of the viewers. But most of the sponsors are only interested in providing cheap humour rather than producing something serious. I would propose sponsored programmes on folk dances in our cultural heritage. Such programmes will also encourage national integration.
Chamanlal Agarwal, Sonapur

• The interview with Manohar Shyam Joshi, the creator of *Humlog*, made absorbing reading (*'Humlog is Meant for the Common Man'*). But most of his answers to Madhu Jain's questions were evasive. The negative point about *Humlog* is that many of our youths are aspiring to become *Lallus*—a youth who faces the challenges of life with stupidity.
J C Khulhe, New Delhi

Mature Dialogue

Most of the interviews of President Ershad to foreign news papers and periodicals are reproduced in Bangladesh's newspapers in an edited form. An exception was when General Ershad spoke to M J Akbar (*'I Want to Love Everybody'*, 7-13 April). I thank SUNDAY for the brilliant interview and the Bangladesh government for allowing us to read it in an unedited form.
Morir Hussain, Dhaka

• President Ershad's answers to most of M J Akbar's questions were evasive. The interview was exhaustive but not enlightening.
M S Hoque, Chittagong

• In an otherwise mature interview, I was surprised to find a question relating to funding of political parties in Dhaka by India. The question was not only embarrassing but detrimental to the good neighbourly relations between the two countries.
H S Ranganatha, Mandya

Brutal Force

There was nothing unusual about the news report, *Rape in Police Custody* (14-20 April). Such incidents are taking place almost every day but they go unreported. The chasm between the common people and the police is increasing and we no longer look upon the police as our protectors.

Kartikeswar Behra, Keonjhar

• The report was an eye opener. In my view, the senior officers are responsible for corrupting the juniors.
Anima Mallack, Nagaon

Misquoted

I am nonplussed by some of the comments ascribed to me in the interview by Sankarshan Thakur (*'It Business Booms, So Does Advertising'*, 14-20 April). A few minor misquotes apart, I certainly did not provide the impossible information that Alyque Padamsee is the "father of Hindustan Lever" or that Lintas is the house agency of Hindustan Lever. After 20 years with the company and given my level of responsibility and information within it, you will appreciate that I am hardly likely to make statements about it that are absurd and untrue.
Stanley Pinto, Director, Lintas India

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

M. J. AKBAR reports from Pakistan

It takes a long time to travel from Orangi to Karachi's centre to get here from Dhaka. That sentence, bland and mildly inaccurate at one level, intricate and poignant at another, contains a world of definitions about our partitioned and repartitioned subcontinent.

Karachi. The census as we in India know only too well, can be a danger

our form of knowledge. According to the tabulations of 1981, the population of Pakistan's richest, most cosmopolitan and most volatile city was 5.1 million. Nobody believes this. A figure around seven million is more credible, but of course no one can be sure. The truth is difficult to face; its consequences could go beyond control.

Population represents power. If numbers and percentages provoke bitter anger, it is because the figures measure our hope and influence. Karachi is the premier city of Sind, but you can't find many Sindhis in this booming port metropolis which is the nation's economic brain and industrial heart. Even twenty per cent is too high an estimate for the Sindhi population of Karachi. Nor does the Sindhi compensate this imbalance of population by a dominant control over the city's wealth. Both the strength of numbers and the confidence of finance are with outsiders, and as for the third side in the power triangle, the government, the Sindhi has long been alienated from the military-bureaucracy nexus which has dominated Pakistan for so many years of its existence.

In fact, even the Pathans, who have spilled across from the mountainous western borders of Sind, are more powerful in Karachi than the Sindhis. Estimated now at about a million strong, they have a complete stranglehold over the transport system. They can immobilise Karachi the day they want to, nothing moves without their consent. And now they have been bolstered by the refugees, an uncounted number of the 3.5 million Afghans seeking refuge in Pakistan have slipped into Karachi. And brought with them a new element in the equation—sophisticated weapons.

But if Karachi is dominated by any one group, it is the immigrants from the northern heartland of India, the Urdu speakers. They are now described by two labels. The first, and the major section, are the *muhajirs*, those who crossed over in the wake of partition from the cities and villages of north India. They were an



Women queue up to cast their vote in the referendum at Rawalpindi

COVER STORY

aggressive and progressive element in the early days of Pakistan, quickly filling the gaps in trade, bureaucracy and social services like health and education left behind by the departing Hindus. In fact, in the early days of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan the *muhajirs* were considered the virtual rulers of Pakistan. Time and the arrival of martial law eroded their sway as political power slipped gradually into the hands of Punjab, where of course it has now become firmly entrenched. From the very beginning, the Urdu speaking migrants were kept out of west Punjab, which was reserved largely for the brethren from east Punjab. Sind was given the burden of housing the Urdu-speakers. No Sindhi was allowed any share in the evacuee property in Sind, which was handed out to the *muhajirs*. This is only one of the resentments which are boiling over now, a generation later.

And then, in the 1970s, came the second migration—of those who could not reconcile themselves to Bangladesh. They have been christened Biharis. Once again there are no exact figures of how many Biharis have settled in Sind, but if there were a million and-a-half Biharis in east Pakistan at least a million must have come west by now. There was a qualitative change in the character of the first and second migrations. For the first group, Pakistan was a dream; the second had to force their way into the country. The Biharis were the great unwanted: they were called scum in Bangladesh and pariahs in Pakistan. The nation they had sought to preserve in 1970 and 1971 now turned its back on them, unwilling to pay the price of its published ideology. After 1971, the Biharis had no illusions left. The civil wars of the 1940s had driven them



The Indian hijackers await trial in Lahore

from their birthplace; the civil war of 1971 uprooted them from their adopted Dhaka. And now, instead of compassion and welcome, they suffered injury and insult. People who are trapped in a blind alley develop their own, distinct characteristics. The Biharis had nowhere else to go. This is where they would have to make their last stand. And on their own terms, the terms of a community which had decided that it would not be defeated again. They brought with them what one observer called the ethos of East Pakistan, an unwillingness to accept an arbitrary status quo, the tension of a community which had been thrice displaced in

one lifetime: the determination of a survivor who had watched in pain his home being set to torch. And they had also learnt that sometimes survival depends not only on faith and grit, but also on the ability to make a good Molotov cocktail.

With each immigration, Karachi's demographic map had changed. In Pakistan, political power has often been determined by street power. In the old days, it was only the Sindhi and Baluch workers living in the slums of Lyaris who could be counted on to mobilise for political action. Gradually, new centres of power grew up. There came Lalukhet and Golimar (now christened Liaquata-



An unemployed youth rushes with his application towards the car of Prime Minister Junjo in Karachi

bad and Gulbahar) as the underprivileged among the Urdu speakers massed into Karachi to find livelihood. It was Lalukhet which could, on any day, put 10,000 people on the streets, it was Lalukhet which first stood up against Field Marshal Ayub Khan. And after 1971, Karachi witnessed the creation of Bihari strength Orangi. This became the third nerve of Karachi. And if Lalukhet was bigger than Lyari, then Orangi was bigger than Lalukhet.

The sea cuts off Karachi to the south, but there is only a desert and a horizon to the north: the city can stretch as far as it likes in that direction. At the foot of the bald, treeless hills which build up into the Kirthar range which separates Sind from Baluchistan, the new township of Orangi has taken shape. "*Apni madad aap karo, hukoomat kuch nahin karegi*" (Help yourself: the government will do nothing). That was the motto which created Orangi. The administration was corrupt and in different at worst, cool at best. Drains and sanitation came thanks largely to local initiative and help from social workers. For each favour from the municipal authorities, bribes had to be paid. And then there



Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo

was the insult. Without employment or offer, the Biharis depended for their livelihood on crafts like sewing, turning out shirts and *kurtas* at subsistence rates. And a few of course, banked on the oldest profession in the world. The cynical young did not have much use for the great rhetoric of religion and nationalism: not after the way they had suffered

during the collapse of the last great idea, Pakistan. They wanted to survive, to prosper, to live with pride. And they were eager to answer the taunts they had had to live through for so long—when all that the Karachiite wanted from Orangi was either a *kurta* for ten rupees or a girl for fifty.

The traffic of Karachi is notorious from Orangi to the heart of the city: could take hours, which is why the Biharis joke that they have not come any nearer Karachi despite their migration from Dhaka. The pressure of population would have been sufficient to choke the streets in any case, but the drivers seem to be out on a strangling mission. Karachi counts its wounded from traffic accidents in hundreds—every month. It is not as if the Pathan drivers want to live up to some bloodthirsty ideal or that they are greedy capitalists who swat pedestrians like flies in their race for profit: they have their problems too. The buses are owned by *saidars* who demand a high return from the driver and the conductor who have to first meet the flat daily rate and then can share a percentage of the over-



A street scene in Peshawar

flow. The system is not oriented towards safe roads, particularly since the police are on the side of the bus owners, sharing the sense of power over the city and dividing the loot. The problem has now escalated to the point where one of the first decisions made by the new "party-less" chief minister of Sind, Syed Ghous Ali Shah, was to order strict enforcement of traffic laws and authorise a new action plan on traffic management.

The worst culprit, typically, is the mini bus. This is not an ordinary two colour bus; it is richly caparisoned, as if it was a war horse leaving for battle rather than a vehicle for the more mundane business of ferrying people. On 15 April, at the Nazimabad Chowranghi near the Sir Syed Girls College, in a predominantly *muhajir* area, a mini bus driven by Jan Mohammad ignored the traffic lights and ploughed into a group of college girls, killing Bushra Zaidi, severely injuring her sister Najma Zaidi (she was still in Abbassi Shaheed hospital a fortnight later) and hurting three more girls. So confident are they that a bribe, if not a wink, will ease matters that Karachi's bus drivers are not particularly bothered about accidents. But on 15 April, they were taught a lesson.

Bushra Zaidi was the fifteenth girl from Sir Syed College to have been killed by rash bus drivers. It was the last straw. The students erupted. They blocked the roads, and burnt every private bus in sight. The police came down heavily on them, but the incident set off a fuse causing multiple fires across the city, as the riot turned into a communal battle between the Biharis and the Pathans. Lalukhet rose, and the Pathan-dominated police killed people in firing. Pathan gangs now began retaliating against Biharis and their institutions. And then they laid siege to Orangi.

Orangi is ringed by Pathan settlements. While the Biharis live in the bowl in the centre, the Pathans occupy the hillsides with which they are traditionally familiar. Of course this is not a hard and fast rule; many localities have mixed populations, as for instance Banaras Chowk (so named because it was started by weavers from Banaras; the power of sentiment can stretch from the Ganges to the Indus). It was at this *chowk* that a confrontation took place when Pathans began attacking Biharis, getting off from buses Bukhari Colony and Sector L of Orangi were attacked by Pathans. A full scale communal war had begun in a



Police beat up anti-government demonstrators in Sind

country which had been created in the presumption that there would be no more communal riots, now that Allah's followers had been provided with their separate geography.

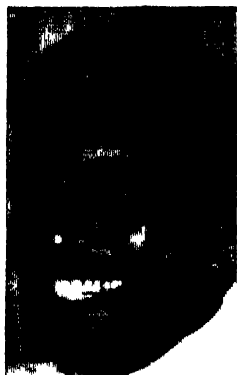
Telephones are not the only way in which people communicate information. There are few telephones in Orangi, but there are poles. Biharis sent their signals by clanging on these poles; the sound was the alert call. And in Sector L they did not surrender. Not only did they confront the better-armed Pathans, but by the 17th they had turned the tables. What helped them do that was their secret weapon: the *kofa*, an acid based homemade bomb. And of course there was the familiar Molotov cocktail. It was now the turn of the Pathans to feel threatened. It took three days before the army and paramilitary forces forced an uneasy calm on Orangi.

"This is the beginning of the end," said the man who had spent a long life in community service with the Biharis. He was 75, but still very alert and very active. He had seen partition, then worked in east Pakistan before coming west after the creation of Bangladesh. Perhaps his depression deepened his pessimism; nations neither begin nor end without tremendous upheavals. But he had his thesis. Islam was not

sufficient to glue together a nation, he now believed. One God, one Prophet—yes; always yes. But when were all Muslims ever one nation after the passing away of the Prophet? Nor would the army be able to hold it all together. "The real beginning was in 1965, when the war exposed the hollowness of the Pakistan army 1971 resulted because the Bengalis realised that the army was a paper tiger. Now the third round has begun!"

Was he reading too much into an incident of social strife which is common enough on the subcontinent? Is the communal divide in Karachi an example of just big city mania, or is it symptomatic of a process stretching all over South Pakistan? The strains on Pakistan's unity have existed for some time now, but is the evolving political structure helping to heal the fissures or deepen them? To the west and north of Karachi lie the answers: in Baluchistan and in the villages of Sind. Both have revolted in the past—Baluchistan in 1974 and Sind in 1983. In 1983 Pakistan shivered as the earthquake threatened its roots. What is the mood of Sind in 1985?

**Next Week:
A Voice On The Indus**



'Halwas and mithais make a lot of us in Pakistan and India join hands together'

M.J. Akbar interviews President Zia-ul-Haq

It was during dinner, after the interview, that, accidentally, in President Mohammad Zia ul Haq we saw a rare side of his personality. He has a daughter who is ill. Anxious for her father's attention before going to sleep, she came and disturbed him at the table. With great love, patience and sympathy, the doting father persuaded the daughter to go to bed on her own. And then, his attention back to the dining table conversation, he once again became the President who has to survive in a maze of contradictions—many of which are his own creation.

General Zia treads on thin ice. This may not be apparent immediately, since the General has shown that personal charm and political dexterity can be a devastating combination. It is, indeed, with some amazement that the world has watched that thin, slippery ice hold up despite the constant tramp of the military boot. But there is awareness among the ruling elite of Pakistan that things have gone too well for too long. Like good military strategists, after having successfully engaged and outmanoeuvred the enemy for eight years, they have prepared the escape route. The problem was a difficult one. The army had to be sent to the background, but with the strings still in its hand, and civilians had to be brought to centre stage without letting the heirs of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto take charge.

The solution: if you can't beat the system, change it. Since the political parties which had been opposing military rule—and in particular the Pakistan People's Party, were likely to win any election, hold an election without them. General Zia first organised a referendum to ensure his own future for five years. Though the President denies it, there is enough evidence to show that the vote in the referendum was less than fair. Still, the facade was created. This was followed by "partyless" elections to the National Assembly where the turnout was better—and consequently disastrous for some of the President's most trusted ministers who were badly defeated. But still, an Assembly had been voted in. However, even this "partyless" Assembly handed the President a rebuff when it defeated General Zia's nominee for Speaker, though it did endorse the General's choice for Prime Minister, Mohammad Khan Junejo, a Sindhi. But the moot question is: can President Zia get away with this hybrid form of democracy? Can this "partyless" system survive the inevitable pressures, particularly if martial law goes (as has been promised by both the President and the new Prime Minister)? President Zia discussed these and other issues in a long interview with M.J. Akbar at Army House, Rawalpindi, where he lives.

Q Mr President, in the first week of July it will be eight years since you took over power. In 1977, nobody gave you even eight months. To what do you attribute this rather long spell in power?

A Short spell in power (laughs). I must confess that even I am surprised. I will be very frank with you. I think it is primarily due to God and I hope you believe in Him. And after God, it is the sincerity of my colleagues, the efforts of my compatriots and the confidence of the people of Pakistan. You can't fool eight and a half million people for eight long years.

Q As Abraham Lincoln said: How much

would you thank the army for your survival?

A For everything: the stability, back up support, raw hands, expertise, technical assistance, legal assistance—all the time.

Q Plus, of course, the infrastructure with which to control the opposition.

A No, that is not the job of the army. That we did through whatever we picked up in political ability as to how the opposition should be controlled: it is a political process, not through the army's hands.

Q How much of your support came from the US?

A Er... It doesn't look nice saying this, but as much as the Soviet support came to India (laughs).

COVER STORY

Q *There is this theory that after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan your position was strengthened immensely and that gave you the momentum for the next five years*

A The situation in Afghanistan has contributed there is no doubt about this. It has not contributed to my prestige, or the stability of the government. But the situation in Afghanistan has a direct reflection on the situation in Pakistan. Pakistan as a country has received far greater attention than it used to get prior to 27 December 1979. As a result and for other good reasons, we got help and assistance from America in the form of military hardware which we purchased ourselves and in the form of economic assistance for which we are grateful to them and any other political support, has helped us to stand up. But you can't say that Pakistan has been stable only because of America's help and only because of the Afghanist situation.

Q *Was the stability of your regime viewed as a necessary component of the stability of Pakistan by the USA?*

A I do not know (about the USA). But we felt that Pakistan needed stability. Pakistan needed continuity. And we thought that when we had not succeeded the first time when holding elections in 1977 and when we failed again in 1979 then we (had to think of other options). It was a very deliberate decision of the government that in order to give Pakistan a true place in the Islamic world and more so in the context of the region we had to have continuity and stability. And the only way to have stability and continuity was to have a long-term programme of four or five years and then see how to go on. And we have followed exactly that course.

Q *The five years are over now, and you are beginning what is clearly a new experiment*

A For the next five years.

Q *Shall I be cynical and ask if it is only a variation of the old experiment?*

A Your asking me will not make the difference. Nor will my reply make the difference. What will make the difference is what emerges out of this experiment. And that will be visible as bright as the daylight. Then there will neither be a conjecture on my part nor an assumption on your part. That's what you should see.

Q *Today or 29 April who is more powerful — you or Prime Minister Junejo?*

A It's not a question of who is more powerful because we are not enemies.

Q *No. Neither is Mr Zail Singh and Mr Rajiv Gandhi. But we know who is more*



General Zia arrives in New Delhi to attend the Non-Aligned Conference

powerful in terms of executive authority

A Then your analysis is not correct. Because you can't have a competition going on between the Prime Minister and the President, as to who is more powerful. What you should be knowing is that under a given system, or a Constitution, how do you come about or how do you solve the difficulties? We have gone through a lot of difficulties, and we feel that we have come across a solution to the problem where the Prime Minister and the President both belonging to the same school of thought, same group of people, should live happily and should have defined areas of activity. And that is what we have been able to achieve.

Q *But are you in the next five years gradually going to ease yourself out from direct decision making?*

A According to the Constitution which we have amended the Prime Minister is supposed to be the chief executive, and the chief executive's powers I need not define. The President is supposed to be the head of the state, the responsibilities of the head of the state I need not define. And the two amongst themselves should devise like we have done for the last one month how to live happily and govern the country.

Q *Well in that case would you advise me next time to interview Mr Junejo?*

A Please. And ask him as many questions as you like. (laughs)

Q *Since your is a senior foreign policy, I am sure people in both countries would like to know a clear answer to the last question. The danger of course is that your bureaucracy might get crossed in the interregnum one eye looking at the Presi*

I must confess that even I am surprised (at having stayed in power for eight years)...I think it is primarily due to God...And after God, it is the sincerity of my colleagues, the efforts of my compatriots and the confidence of the people of Pakistan. You can't fool eight-and-a-half million people for eight long years.

'The talk of war clouds was only on your part. Here it was all sunshine'

The judges (Justices Yaqub Ali and Anwar-ul Haq) were very much with us—as long as the goodies were there.

dent's office and the other looking at the Prime Minister's office

A That is a basic dichotomy, a duality. When there is none, people will look to the right direction for the right guidance.

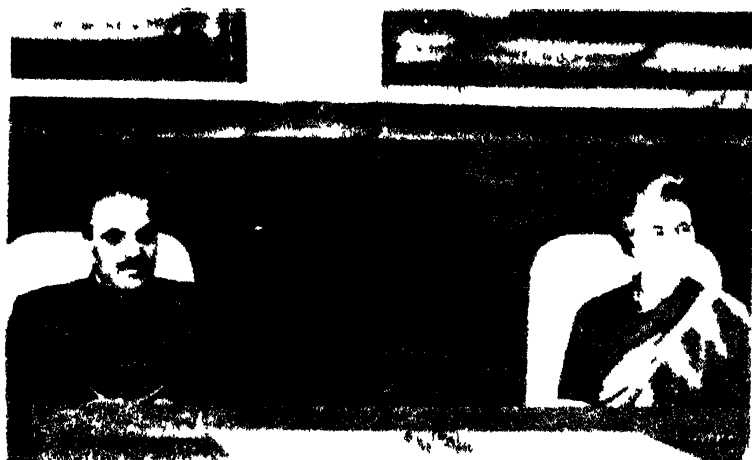
Q How much of guidance would you be giving?

A Only that much for which I have the discretionary powers. As for the rest, I am bound by the advice of the Prime Minister.

Q Including on when martial law should be lifted?

A No. That is my prerogative. But even there, I have said I will abide by the advice of the Prime Minister. I only said it yesterday.

Q Your opponents allege that the army is moving into the background because this year is going to see the beginning of the economic downturn and the problems are going to mount. Pakistan is importing wheat after a long time. And it might be a good idea to let the civilians take the can for many of these problems. How do you respond to such criticism?



President Zia with Indira Gandhi

Mr Gorbachev didn't threaten Pakistan. His attitude was very correct, very firm and he has a lot of understanding. He listened to me very patiently and whatever he had to say, he spoke very firmly.

A This is in bad taste. Because the economy is not going to the dogs. The economy is as good as it was two years ago. Yes, we have some difficulties. And we have gone through these difficulties for the last nine years. The economy is as strong as it was, it is as stable as it was before. In fact, the strongest part of the economy is the cotton crop and nearly 12 million bales of cotton have already been sold. This is the largest bargain Pakistan has made in many years.

Q International prices of cotton were however lower this year.

A Yes, prices were lower this year, but what difference does that make? We would get about the same amount. Even if we have to import two million tonnes of wheat, two million is my target, we think about 12 or 15 million tonnes of wheat would be sufficient. But even if we have to do this, it is offset by the cotton sale. So the economy is as good as it was stable. The growth this year is nine per cent, four per cent in agriculture.

Q But by 12 to 14 per cent, the wheat price does not go up. It is a very low price.

sated by the greater generation of resources within the country. So look at it in any way you like, ignoring the political aspects of the projection of the economic situation, which may have been done with certain intentions, the actual reality is that the Pakistan economic situation has never been so good as it is today.

Q Do you think that the army can actually be removed from the power structure in Pakistan now?

A In what sense?

Q In the sense that take Bangladesh General Ershad says the army cannot be removed from the power structure of Bangladesh. It has to be given some place whatever the new system might be.

A Our thinking is that the army has no place in the power structure. The army has its own responsibilities and the army has no role in the political life other than what all the armies in the world have, guarantee the external boundaries and safeguard the security of the country from internal subversion.

Q Let me think aloud, would 1989 see another referendum where a representative of the army might want to sit in the presidential chair?

A If he wants to, he won't sit through a referendum. He will sit through a martial law.

Q In other words, back to the old practice.

A If you are thinking that way, yes, that can happen because there is no guarantee that there will be no martial law. Unless we really take certain measures, and by that time eliminate all possibilities of martial law. But you can't say that there will be no referendum, whether I hold it, a new President holds it, the Prime Minister holds it. Because the referendum is a process which we have now institutionalised in the form of making it a part of Pakistan's revised Constitution.

Q In the last referendum, both observers from all over the world and people who were here don't believe that you got much of a vote.

A That is as white a lie as a lie can be white. Totally utter disregard to the reality. It was a very successful referendum. We are not concerned what people outside say.

Q I am also talking of people within Pakistan.

A Within Pakistan there is a group of people who do not recognise the elections, are you going to trust this handful of people who say that we are not even recognising the elections where the turnout has been 53 per cent and 57 per cent? No sane man will do so, but they are saying they do not recognise the elections. What do we do? Shall we accept their version, or shall we accept the reality? The reality of the referendum was that it was one of the most successful referendums that we have had, where there was a landslide (in my favour).

Q May be the landslide led to some of the doubts?

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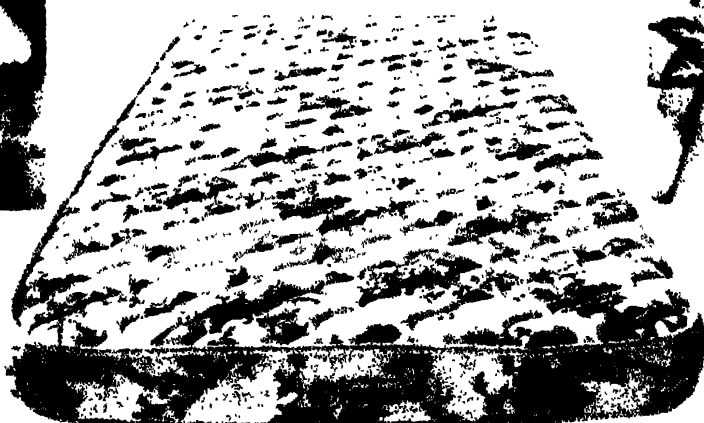
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A No The doubts are a self creation of interested parties, and a few of them are foreign journalists, unfortunately

Q The foreign hand?

A No I don't say foreign hand But foreign journalists have their own ideas why a referendum should be held They think they know the Pakistan problem better than anybody else and therefore they have gone and seen a polling station where 10 people have turned out so they have declared that the whole of Pakistan (has a similar polling percentage) An individual who is related to a very important broadcasting corporation was having a loose tummy on that day

Q BBC?

A (Laughs) And he collected figures here and there and the next morning he wrote accordingly It's not right It's not correct You can go and ask anybody in Pakistan what is the correct position what has been the turnout in the referendum, national elections and the people will tell you

Q Did you protest to the BBC?

A No I haven't I don't believe in that India has done it I haven't

Q We believe in protesting

A I don't (laughs)

Q Given Pakistan's experience with civilian governments from the Fifties to Mr Bhutto do you think civilians can be trusted to provide good government?

A They must It is the political leadership of the country (which) by and large must come from the civilian politicians It is only rarely that a military man comes up

Q Yes It is inevitable when a military man survives

A Yes It should not be taken that if Zia ul Haq has survived everybody else will survive We must find out political leadership among the civilian population

Q But the very first thing almost that you had to do after the creation of the National Assembly was in fact give a sanction to corruption by saying that the law on election expenditure will have to be waived because you don't want legislators to begin with a lie Now the people who have spent the money don't you think they are going to recover it through corruption?

A No This much I will assure that they won't And they have spent that money and in my opinion—I have talked to a number of them those who have honestly confirmed that yes, they have spent that much of money—I don't think they are that type who will try to recover the money because they have plenty themselves

Q But people with plenty of money always like another good investment

A Haan (yes) But I don't think this time we will let them invest in this way In fact, the same is true with India But what will happen in the future? We have given this task to the National Assembly—those who have spent this money and now realise that perhaps it was not the right method—please we will find an answer to this because this is not right This is neither democracy—leave



Air Marshal Asghar Khan (extreme right)

alone the Islamic aspect of it—and we hope we will find some way out

Q How far can you trust a civilian government to have the same commitment to Nizam e Mustafa that you have?

A More Because, after all they are as good Muslims that I am In fact I have drawn my inspiration from some civilian scholars And I see no reason why the Pakistan civilian politicians should not be able to guide the country according to Islamic thought and process

Q Air Marshal Asghar Khan has just made a statement saying that the anti Bhutto forces removed Bhutto for elections not to replace him with Nizam e Mustafa

A But Air Marshal Khan is not a through bled civilian (laughs) He is ex air force

Q I was merely suggesting that he might reflect another trend in Pakistan's public opinion

A No These are a few diehards stubborn rigid individuals who have certain opinions And we respect them even for that After all why should not a man believe that in Pakistan Islamic values are nothing we should have secular values Let him say so

Q What is the philosophical base of the system that you are trying to create?

A I am trying to establish not create While I confess that in running a country you ought to have tools you ought to have institutions I am also convinced in my mind that you can do it better without the so called political parties Particularly the political parties of the type that we had and we have I am trying to see that individuals dedicated to the country who have been selected rightly from the electorate having come into the Assembly in a strength of 237 need not be grouped into five ten 20 or one or 30 parties They should be able to act in unison over defined subjects over policies and should be able to give the guidance to the country as a collective body rather than

These (people like Air Marshal Asghar Khan) are a few diehards; stubborn, rigid individuals who have certain opinions. And we respect them even for that. After all, why should not a man believe that in Pakistan Islamic values are nothing; we should have secular values.



The late Prime Minister receiving President Zia at Palam airport for the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit in Delhi

I do not say that India hasn't got a democracy... You had a good crop of politicians, you had stability, you had continuity. You had an accepted leadership. But you have allowed the democracy of the Third World or a developing country to become something where everything is allowed: the goondaism, the violence...

groups of individuals belonging to various schools of thought according to the principles of the political parties. This is what I am trying.

Q Yes, but you know in the Speaker's election it became virtually a two party contest.

A No. You have to look at the background of the Speaker's election. Because the same house (which) was divided over the Speaker's election, was unanimous—not a majority, but unanimous—over the mandate to the Prime Minister. So you have to see the reason why.

Q Why did they split on the Speaker?

A They split on only two counts. One, perhaps in the losing contender they saw something of the past which they did not want to be reminded of, he was in the past an elected representative of a nominated party in the Shooru.

This is one reason. Number two reason, is that the loser—I have great regard for him and I was very sorry that a man of his experience and knowledge could not become the Speaker but I was trying to analyse the reason and the second reason is that maybe he has annoyed a few people and the third one was, which played an important role, there was a body which had 40 schoolmates from one school. It was this group which led the so called revolt. If I may call it so, and got 190 votes. It is just one of those things which happens.

Q Is there a parallel in Islamic polity or Islamic history for such a system?

A No. Unfortunately we have no precedent of any kind of this nature. We have to devise our own formula.

Q But President depending on the individual more than the organisation, or the party seems to me to be a very short route to chaos.

A No. It may be (instead) a proper route to stability and continuity. Because you know these individuals, for the first time, at least in our experience of 37 years, each individual has won or lost in the elections only because of his personal merits. It had nothing to do whether he belonged to the Pagara group or this group or that. Maybe his clan came into it, or his family, or his own money. But there are many, I tell you, who have won these elections with no money, no background of any family, carried out their campaign on a cycle, and have won the elections by thousands of votes. So it is a phenomenon. The more you study it the more you realise that it has a potential. But where I have not been able to strike since we have no precedent, is how to make even those members who are in unison in their thinking connect to a particular time and policy. This is what these days the Prime Minister, myself, my colleagues, MPs—we are all engaged in this. And I hope we'll be able to find an answer to this.

Q You have banned political parties. But in the real world they continue to exist.

A Yes. Because we have not applied the banning so strictly, so severely.

Q So, as political entities they continue to

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function So if tomorrow martial law is lifted—not a very hypothetical situation—and Miss Benazir Bhutto comes back to Pakistan how will you tackle the political consequences?

A Yes, with amendments. And in this regard we made no amendments. The original text says when martial law is lifted the political parties will have to be revived. It is at that time, when the political parties have to be revived, that the government has to think on what lines they should be revived. At the present moment the parties are not only dormant, they are banned, and therefore when you want to revive them, they just can't be allowed to revive by themselves in any form or another. Parliament will have to pass a law about its functioning. Assuming that the Parliament revives the parties, it will have to revive them under some law. And it is under that law that we will have to regulate the activities of the political parties. And if Miss Benazir Bhutto comes, and she wants to revive this political party on the lines of the Parliament's law she is most welcome. We have nothing against her.

Q This is the 1973 Constitution with amendments

A Yes, with amendments. And in this regard we made no amendments. The original text says when martial law is lifted the political parties will have to be revived. It is at that time, when the political parties have to be revived, that the government has to think on what lines they should be revived. At the present moment the parties are not only dormant, they are banned, and therefore when you want to revive them, they just can't be allowed to revive by themselves in any form or another. Parliament will have to pass a law about its functioning. Assuming that the Parliament revives the parties, it will have to revive them under some law. And it is under that law that we will have to regulate the activities of the political parties. And if Miss Benazir Bhutto comes, and she wants to revive this political party on the lines of the Parliament's law she is most welcome. We have nothing against her.

Q How do you assess the PPP's strength today?

A The PPP is no force of significance today. And it will never be so. Because a political party which builds up on terror, on goondaism, on all the aspects of life which are condemned where there is no respect by a politician for a politician, where the respect for the family has gone down the drain, it can never come up. Under the circumstances, where we have enhanced the values of life much higher than those that were practised generally, I don't think it has any chance.

Q But it may benefit from the unpopularity of martial law or the unpopularity of the army

A If martial law was unpopular, Mr Akbar, you and I wouldn't have been sitting and talking (laughs). It is as simple as that.

Q We might have been talking in India?

A (Laughs) Perhaps I might have come there to explain why martial law has been so unpopular!

Q Justices Yaqub Ali and Anwar ul Haq in public seminars have just made the point that martial law is unpopular in Pakistan now

A That's what they think. They are not the public opinion.

Q Yes, but they are not irresponsible people?

A They are judges. And judges only see through the logic of reasoning, and not of reality. They should give verdicts on law, not on politics which they do not understand. But in any case, I have respect for both of them. And whatever they have been saying is not political thinking, but a consequence of their experiences. One went out (from the Supreme Court) because of the referendum, and the other went out because he didn't

want to sign the new oath. And now the same people who were doing something else (earlier) are saying something else (after leaving their chair). This is a dichotomy in their thinking, and not in the people.

Q Yes, but their dichotomy has been created by the arbitrary nature of executive authority which they have had to face

A Oh, no, no. They were very much with us—as long as the goodies were there (laughs).

Q Will you remain a serving general after martial law is lifted?

A Unlikely. The President of Pakistan can be a general, but I think a serving general who has a responsibility otherwise may perhaps not be able to hold two offices. I have to give up one job to hold the other.

Q Do you think Pakistan will ever have a democracy like India?

A A natural democracy like India. My ideals are very high. I do not say that India

Pakistan is nowhere near a nuclear option... Pakistan has no intentions, no desire, of opting for a military use of nuclear weapons or nuclear devices.



Gen Zia (right) proceeding for the last rites of Mrs Gandhi

The army (in Pakistan) has no place in the power structure. The army has its own responsibilities, and the army has no role in the political life... It should not be taken that if Zia-ul Haq has survived, everybody else will survive. We must find out political leadership among the civilian population.

hasn't got a democracy. You have developed—you are lucky, lucky in many ways—you had a good crop of politicians, you had stability, you had continuity. You had an accepted leadership. But you have allowed the democracy of the third world or a developing country to become something where everything is allowed: the goondaism, the violence, what we have a little bit, you have there. That's not my idea. We want to have a purified Islamic democracy. And I hope one day I am able to achieve this and then offer it.

Q As long as it is a democracy for the people. How would you describe the present situation as a quasi democracy?

A A total democracy. Except for myself, and the name of martial law—martial law is only in name, not in practice. We have a civilian elected Prime Minister, we have a military man elected President, and we have all the Assemblies functioning. It is the normal form of government in any democracy, not Islamic to that extent, but it is functioning, and I think it is as near to a democracy as it could be. Except the name of martial law is there, and I am there in uniform.

Q Can democracy ever be divisible? It is a bit like virginity: either you are a virgin or not a virgin. Either you are a democrat or not a democrat.

A Yes, there could be a degree of democracy. You could have a democracy of a particular type. Do you think the Communist states are not democratic? They say so. It may not be democratic from our point of view. So, you can be democratic to the extent that you like, there is no black and white, there are stages. And we are going through a stage where we are reaching close to where you are.

Q To begin talking about India, I thought the starting point might well be to ask you how you liked the 40 kgs of sweets that Mr Bhandari brought for you from our Prime Minister recently.

A (Laughs) Did he bring 40 kgs?

Q That's what we read in the papers.

A I don't know. I got a couple of nice packets of *barfi*. He must have brought for distribution to other friends. I am not sure about this, but I am very grateful for the most delicious few packets that I received.

Q Does the sweetness of the packet reflect the state of Indo-Pak relations now?

A It was certainly very thoughtful and a good gesture. And *halwas* and *mithais* make a lot of us in Pakistan and India join hands together. It was a good visit. All said and done, Mr Bhandari's was a very good visit. It was a successful visit and I think it did have that little opening to come back to the old



President Zia ul Haq casts his vote in the National Assembly elections

lines of talking together

Q Do you notice any change in Delhi's attitude after Mr Rajiv Gandhi has taken charge?

A I noticed even when I was there at the time of the last rites (of Mrs Gandhi) and I had a very frank, intense and forthright dialogue with Mr Rajiv Gandhi. And I felt that I was talking to the right man, and perhaps India and Pakistan have good, bright prospects in the future. And I am seeing it coming.

Q How different is Mr Rajiv Gandhi from his mother in terms of attitudes to Pakistan?

A I have been asked this question by a large number of people.

Q We are all desperate to know.

A But I have never said (laughs) The difference is visible in my mind, but I don't think it is right to compare a son with his mother.

Q Do you think it might embarrass the son?

A Even otherwise I think as a gentleman, it is not right.

Q What was the content of your talks with our Prime Minister?

A In New Delhi we talked of how to revive the confidence, because we both agreed that if we start from the areas of conflict we won't get anywhere. Why don't we start on the areas of agreement? And there are a large number of places where we have areas of agreement. And we thought of how to create how to generate confidence because our crisis is a crisis of confidence and perceptions. So we agreed that we should be forthright. Frank. No one should meddle in the internal affairs of any country like our experience in 1983 (during the Sind agitation) when the Indian government was making announcements on Pakistan's happenings. Nor I assured him, was there truth in Pakistan being involved in the internal affairs of India by aiding the Sikhs in the east Punjab. There is no truth in that. And we thought that India and Pakistan being such typical neighbours of the developing Third World there should be much more close, direct contacts between the leaders of the two states.

Q We hear often of "good intentions" but was there anything specific discussed to promote them?

A Yes, we revived the talks. We agreed that the joint commission must meet, and people must start going and coming, trade must start. We discussed all those points and I think they will all be coming up in the next ministerial conference.

Q Can you offer some specific suggestions that would go a long way to improving relations? What would you like India to do?

A What I would like from India, and what I would like Pakistan to do also. There is only one fundamental requirement. If that is achieved, the rest will fall in place. And that fundamental requirement is faith and trust. If I have no trust in my neighbour, nothing can change my heart. The same thing is true with the neighbour on the other side. There must be a tremendous number of actions



President Zia at a Republic day reception hosted by the Indian ambassador

there must be exercises to find how to generate confidence. There is confidence among the common people but there is perhaps less confidence at a higher level, and perhaps there is none at the top level. Unless there is confidence at heart at the government level, and the people to people level, you can't improve relations.

Q I am talking of specific instances. Why don't we remove the communication barriers? In any case, nobody can stop the smugglers from going through each other's borders.

A We suggested this. This point is right on top of the agenda of the joint ministerial commission. We have done many things unilaterally, but we found that the results were not there unless the other side reciprocated. So, now, having done things unilaterally—not once but half a dozen things—we found the results were not forthcoming. Now, since we have institutionalised this, and the committees have been formed let those committees take the decisions and the governments will implement them.

Q Why don't you unilaterally allow us to keep a correspondent?

A Here in Pakistan? You are most welcome. There are already two.

Q Just the Telegraph and SUNDAY.

A Have two, not one. Have two.

Q I have a Pakistani friend who makes popular TV programmes. Anwar Maqsood of Doordarshan invited him to do a script. Would the Pakistan government have any objections?

A None whatsoever.

Q You met our Prime Minister twice. Did you notice any change in him before the elections and after the elections?

A The first time when I met him it was on a sad occasion. The second time when I met him, he had not only won the elections but he had left it far behind and was looking for greater glories in the future. I found him a

The fundamental requirement (for improving Indo-Pak relations) is faith and trust. If I have no trust in my neighbour, nothing can change my heart. There is confidence among the common people, but there is less confidence at a higher level, and perhaps there is none at the top level.

All said and done Mr Bhandari's was a very good visit. It was a successful visit and I think it did have that little opening to come back to the old lines of talking together.



Indian foreign secretary Romesh Bhandari presenting sweets to Gen Zia

I've only worked as part of my duty. What destiny has in store, what history has in store, it has never bothered me. What I've done is to do my job honestly and sincerely and to the satisfaction of my conscience. And the day I think I don't have this, I would no longer be on the scene.

very confident and a very friendly and a very amicable personality.

Q: The more important question is: Do you think that he would like to keep a war option open in his thinking?

A: Internally, what is in his mind, one can't say. But from the talks I could see that, perhaps like me, he would also like to ignore the military options. That is the feeling I get.

Q: So, you feel confident that the no-war pact you could not sign with his mother might be possible now?

A: Very much so. Now it is very much on the cards.

Q: There is now a third meeting between you and Mr Gandhi on the agenda of intentions. How far have both governments progressed towards that?

A: I think the two drafts have been merged, and it is just a question of giving the final touches. And if the political will is there to sign, I think it can be ready in a day. (Turns to Mr Abdul Sattar, former Pak ambassador to Delhi). Am I right, Mr Sattar? ("Only two or three articles are left," is Mr Sattar's reply.) (We are talking of) the no-war pact and the treaty of friendship; the merger of the two.

Q: Do you envisage a summit this year?

A: This year the summit is to take place in any case, in connection with SARC.

Q: I was asking about a bilateral summit.

A: No bilateral summit is yet planned. But if it is planned in the next meeting of the joint ministerial commission, or the foreign ministers conference, at least from Pakis-

tan's side we'll have no objections.

Q: Is a trip by Rajiv Gandhi to Pakistan on the cards?

A: That's a different thing. We have extended a very sincere invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Pakistan anytime he feels like. Maybe, when he is going abroad somewhere, if he can drop in. Or, when he is returning (from a trip abroad) he can drop in for a few days. It will give a lot of encouragement and will be a very good gesture. We are waiting for it, and the chances are that perhaps he might do that. There is no confirmation yet, but I think we are expecting that perhaps he will respond positively.

Q: Did you feel any apprehension of a border conflict either during Operation Bluestar or during Mrs Gandhi's assassination during those days of tension?

A: No, no, no. The talk of war clouds was only on your part. Here it was all sunshine (laughs).

Q: Why did Pakistan Television show the film on Operation Bluestar knowing reasonably well that it would incite people and create problems in Punjab?

A: Pakistan Television did not make that film. It was shown elsewhere, on foreign television. And Pakistani public had to be kept informed. Pakistan TV acquired this film and showed it.

Q: The suspicion there was that the film was meant for the Sikhs across the border as it was to show Pakistanis.

A: We know we have an audience in east



Gen Zia with Rajiv Gandhi: talking to the right man

Punjab. But there is a much larger number of (video) cassettes available in east Punjab (about these events) than what Pakistan TV started off.

Q: Many people seem to believe that you are hiding Bhindranwale somewhere in Pakistan.

A: (Laughs) They have to do a lot of searching then!

Q: Among the Akali demands is the control of all gurdwaras by the SGPC. You have gurdwaras here too. Has the SGPC approached you to ask for control of the gurdwaras?

A: The gurdwaras and the Akali Dal are controlled by the Pakistani auqaf.

Q: But the SGPC wants to take over control.

A: No. In our country, how can they? They can cooperate with them to fulfil their requirements, but the SGPC has no jurisdiction in Pakistan.

Q: Would you allow Sikhs to keep arms in the gurdwaras?

A: In Pakistan?

Q: Yes.

A: They can keep their kirpans if they want to. But I see no justification of carrying (any other) weapons inside Pakistan. We don't allow our own citizens to do so.

Q: Would you have sent the army into the Golden Temple?

A: This is a very hypothetical question, and I don't think I am competent to answer.

Q: Actually, I didn't put it rightly. What I will ask is: Would you send the army into a

mosque if you believed a mosque had become an armed fortress?

A: It happened in Kaa'ba. But there is always a price to be paid, and one can resolve a problem, but the price that is paid has far-reaching effects. And if I have to do (consider such an option), I'll avoid it like anything.

Q: So you see far-reaching effects in India?

A: I pray...I don't think I should comment on this. I shall pray that India can resolve the Sikh problem, because Sikhs, as you know and I know it, are a very emotional people. They feel they have been hurt. From what we know from reading in your press, not through my contacts of which I have none—

Q: Do you want to repeat that?

A: Yes, yes. My only contacts are the pilgrims whom I meet with the greatest of pleasure. So, in the interest of the country's unity: I am sure the government of India is doing its best and I am not there to advise them—I think the sooner the problem is resolved the better it will be.

Q: Doesn't the GHQ in Pakistan ever get the temptation to intervene in Punjab?

A: Why should we? We are not children. We are all grown-up people; mature to the extent that any government should be; responsible people. We don't work on whims or emotions. I think cold-blooded logic is the way to...good-neighbourly relations.

Q: Do you believe that religion is a good enough basis for a nation's unity, given the record of the last 40 years?

I shall pray that India can resolve the Sikh problem, because Sikhs, as you know and I know it, are a very emotional people. They feel they have been hurt.

We are not in competition with India. Indian resources, Indian requirements are much greater. But we would certainly urge India that having exploded one device, please don't opt for a military weapon because it is not good for mankind as such; leave alone our region.

You can't have a competition going on between the Prime Minister and the President, as to who is more powerful... We feel that we have come across a solution to the problem where the Prime Minister and the President should live happily.



President Zia with Prime Minister Zail Singh

A: Not only this, Mr Akbar, I do not agree with all the logic you have given in *The Siege Within*.

Q: (Laughs) *That's incidental to Indo-Pak relations.*

A: In my mind it is religion only. When I say religion, I mean Islam, the *deen* of Islam. The *deen* of Islam is the only focal point on which Pakistan's everything must revolve.

Q: *Then why did Bangladesh go away? They also believe in Islam and the deen.*

A: It was not a fault of Islam. We didn't follow Islam. It was known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. But we did everything un-Islamic, with the result that one part fell apart. You can't blame Islam for this; you can blame the way we followed it. And it is our effort now to follow Islam in the right manner. And you see how what *Pakistaniat* has been sprouted among this 85 million people. It was never there before.

Q: *In that case, you accept that it is theoretically sound to say that Sikhism can form the basis of a separate nation.*

A: No, you've got me wrong. India is a secular state, and therefore religion from that point of view makes no difference.

Pakistan is an Islamic state. You asked a question of President Ershad (the reference was to the SUNDAY interview): Is Bangladesh an Islamic state? And his answer was no. You haven't asked me this question...

Q: *That is because I know your answer is yes.*

A: Yes, very much yes. Because this is an Islamic state, right in, right out. And therefore in our context *deen*, not religion, the *deen* of Islam is the main fulcrum. But you can't say that since I believe so, I'm also applying this to (the) Akalis. That's your business to judge.

Q: *Another question follows: if you say that Islam can form the basis of nationalism and Pakistaniat: Now one of the persons who fought for Pakistan before 1947 is G.M. Syed, and today he is a champion of Sindhi nationalism. How has he become disillusioned with the Pakistan that has been created?*

A: Mr G.M. Syed is not against Pakistan.

Q: *I'm talking of the Sind nationalist leader G.M. Syed.*

A: Yes. He is for *Jiye Sind* (Live, Sind). Sind could be a high-degree province of Pakistan. He is *Jiye Sind*. He gives priority to Sind, everything to Sind. Sind must exist, Pakistan may or may not exist. But he is not as such against Pakistan. I met Mr G.M. Syed. And I think in 1940 if we didn't have him (in the Muslim League) perhaps we would not have been as successful. So a man who believed in one thing unless he goes wonky... And Mr G.M. Syed is a very capable, competent man. I've met him, I've talked to him. I think he's very sane. There must be something in him. Somebody must have done something to annoy him. Personalities get upset over small things, and one should look into the heart of the man who was all (the) time a Pakistani. Why is it that he now talks about Sind?

Q: *You should answer that.*

A: Yes, I'm trying to find it out. And I will find it out. We found it out in Wali Khan; we found it out in Ghaffar Khan. I told them, I said they were as patriotic as anybody could be. Why should we doubt their integrity? Yes, if they want to follow a different policy. They want Pakistan to be secular and I want Pakistan to be Islamic. We can have differences of opinion. But that does not mean we should start shouting and calling each other unpatriotic and disloyal, and that he's an agent of... No. I think they're as good Pakistanis as any Pakistani can be. But the difference of opinion in Islam has a tremendous place in one's freedom of thought. And Islam encourages freedom of thought. So everyone of them, whether he is a *Jiye Sind* or whether he is NDP, whether he is a Red Shirt, has all the freedom to start thinking in whatever form they may like, except on the ideology of Pakistan. On that there is no compromise.

Q: *As far as relations with India are concerned: the other potential area which could lead to a crisis is the nuclear option which suddenly seems to have become much more real. In fact, the language is deteriorat-*

ing and we have been hearing of the doctrine of terror and counterterror. The blunt question is: How near is Pakistan to a nuclear option?

A Nowhere near. The blunt answer to this is that Pakistan has no intentions, no desire, of opting for a military use of nuclear weapons or nuclear devices. Pakistan wants to acquire nuclear technology purely for peaceful purposes. We have no other intentions at all whatsoever. And we have offered to India half a dozen proposals of ensuring nuclear nonproliferation in this region, of ensuring that we don't step out or we don't go beyond our limits so that we can have a better cooperation. But so far we have not received any response.

Q If India decided to go in for nuclear weapons, how long would it take you to achieve parity?

A We are not in competition with India in this respect. Not in any other respect. We are not in competition with India. Indian resources, Indian requirements are much greater. But we would certainly urge India that having exploded one device, please don't opt for a military weapon because it is not good for mankind, is such, leave alone our region.

Q Are you contemplating specific talks on the nuclear option?

A We are in continuous touch on this matter.

Q I know the Pakistani position on arms. But to keep that huge subject within manageable proportions, the Indian suspicion on the arms question lies in, for example, your purchase of 155 millimetre howitzers or heavy tanks which would not be operational on the Afghan border and therefore could only be used against India.

A How do you say so? The 155 millimetre howitzers or the SP guns are primarily meant for a country which has no roads, no infrastructure. They are semi-automatic machines which are good only for areas where there are no proper infrastructures and this is on our west, not on the east. So they are meant for the west and not for the east.

Q But the heavy tanks and the heavy guns would be really useful only in a war against India.

A No, not necessarily. They are as good; you can use them anywhere you like. But our priority is west, not east.

Q How do you react to the US under secretary for defense Fred Ikle going to Delhi to offer India arms?

A As long as it serves the purpose of bringing India and the United States of America in a better frame of mind, Pakistan would be too pleased. And Pakistan has always said that Pakistan is not concerned with what the United States gives to India and what India gets from the United States of America; that is a result of the mutual requirements of the two countries. Who are we? And we expect the same (attitude from India). But unfortunately, everytime we get something (in arms), we also get a statement from India, which is not right. So from that



PPP chief Benazir Bhutto in London: no force of significance

point of view, please, for the government of India, for the people of India, if (there is) anything that you want from anywhere you like, as long as you think it's good for your own defence, who am I to say (anything)? But follow the same policy elsewhere. What is good for the goose must be good for the gander.

Q Has the gander spoken to the Soviets on the potential purchase of arms?

A No, no, we haven't. But you have talked to the gander, now you are talking to the goose.

Q Would it be right to say that by and large the issues of territorial claims which the two nations have on each other are paper arguments and are not strong enough to create the kind of tensions they did in the Sixties?

The Pakistan People's Party is no force of significance today. And it will never be so.



Anti government demonstrators protest against martial law in Sind

A Except the question of Kashmir. Except Kashmir which is the only big hurdle. Except for that I think the rest is nothing.

Q Yes, but Kashmir has been the subject of two wars.

A But in Kashmir also India has accepted that Skardu will be part of this part of Pakistan. That has been so. There has been no ceasefire line, no demarcation, no United Nations observers. So it has only been kept as a lever on paper. And at the right time, I'm sure that India will say all right, we agree.

Q But then Kashmir is the issue, isn't it?

A Yes, that is the issue. It is a volatile issue. And therefore I have said that if you start talking about Kashmir, then somebody will suggest let's fight the fourth war, which I will not advocate. So let us put Kashmir aside. We'll talk about this Kashmir, we'll see how best we can solve (the problem) peacefully. We don't have to fight a war to solve it. How many of the territorial rights and disputes between France and Germany, between Germany and Austria, between the various parts of the countries of Europe, between America and South America, how many times they have solved it. They don't have to go to war everytime. And I'm sure we can resolve the question of Kashmir provided we create understanding and goodwill by agreeing on the areas of agreement, and then coming on to the areas of disagreement. Kashmir is a volatile area of disagreement. Let us leave it. We'll touch it at the appropriate time. Let's build more confidence, let

there be more exchange of people, thoughts, journalists, everybody should come and go.

Q Are you hearing similar language from Rajiv Gandhi on this subject?

A I am sure, I am sure! We have not talked to that extent but what little we have been able to do I thought his gesture in Moscow by sending Mr Bhandari here and starting off the joint ministerial commission is a good omen.

Q In Moscow you met Mr Gorbachev also and there was a lot of controversy on whether he was tough with you and threatened Pakistan or not. Now let us have it from you. Was he tough? Did he threaten Pakistan?

A (Smiles) No, he didn't threaten Pakistan. His attitude was very correct, very firm and he had a lot of understanding. He listened to me very patiently and whatever he had to say he spoke very firmly. The message was very clear.

Q What was the message?

A The message was that he felt Pakistan was interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and he said lay off. And I told him that we are not in it, but we cannot stop shouting. And this is the difference of opinion between the two sides. But we both agreed that this is an area where you must resolve it militarily. It has to be resolved politically. Mr Gorbachev agreed one hundred per cent. And we said, well then why not allow the United Nations effort to succeed? And he said he would give his support.

Q To the UN effort which means that the chances of the June talks—

A Are very bright.

Q You have an ambassador of the United States here. Mr Deane Hinton, who does tend to make statements on the internal affairs of Pakistan.

A No, Mr Hinton has been very correct. We have other ambassadors who sometimes get out of step.

Q The Indian ambassador?

A No, the Indian ambassador has been. He did once or twice, but by and large he has been all right. But we have other ambassadors who have been talking out of turn.

Q The Soviet ambassador?

A Yes, we have had a couple of statements from him. But Mr Hinton has been very correct.

Q But when he says that the MRD should have its head examined?

A Generally, a diplomat doesn't talk (about such things). But if he is talking in a particular context then of course I think we should give him the right to express his opinion on a particular point of thought, not on the internal affairs of the country.

Q The other controversial statement that you are reported to have made is on Biharis in Karachi. Did you describe them as 'Bhikaris'?

A No, no I was misreported (laughs heartily).

Q Will the Orangi clash between Biharis and Pathans cause a setback in bringing the Biharis from Bangladesh?

Sind could be a high-degree province of Pakistan. He (G.M. Syed) is for Jiye Sind. He gives priority to Sind, everything to Sind. Sind must exist; Pakistan may or may not exist.

COVER STORY

A Perhaps, I'm not sure But it certainly has left a very deep mark that, with all this effort, and without any cause, an area can be up in arms for nothing and 38 people's lives have been lost Why?

Q Are the Biharis to blame for it?

A It happened in their area, where they are in a majority And it has left us in a very dejected mood The individuals who fought for Pakistan, who did so much for Pakistan, having come into Pakistan, they are now indulging in hooliganism

Q They feel a sense of depression, that they don't feel like equals in Pakistan

A They have as many rights as anybody else They have elected their own representatives in the provincial Assembly from the Orangi area They have all the liberties, they have all the freedoms, they are as good as citizens as anyone else in Pakistan Why? I do not understand—honest to God I can see the incident happening in Liaquatabad, I can see the incident happening in Nazimabad A bus runs over you can see the crowd getting rowdy, burning the bus taking out the driver you can see all this But without any incident 38 people being murdered, butchered in the next door area, unnecessarily What is the reason?

Q Perhaps you should put them in separate nations (The President laughs) The charge of Punjabi domination, however, over the non Punjabis of Pakistan is believed by the non Punjabis

A No, there is no such thing

Q And the army is considered to be the spine of Punjabi domination over Pakistan

A No, these are all conjectures, or statements coined for a particular purpose by outside agencies

Q How do you view the state of the opposition at the moment?

A They are active, they will surface when martial law is lifted and political activity is generated A certain amount of opposition would be there

Q You would not stop the Bhutto Begums from coming to Pakistan?

A We never, never stopped them (from) going abroad This is their country Let them come any time they like They asked to go abroad, and they have gone We have not stopped them They can come back tomorrow

Q Who in the opposition do you feel, has the most credibility now?

A I think there is no such thing as an organised opposition as yet There are individuals who are talking And the situation will emerge more clearly when political life gets more organised Once the Assembly starts functioning, the Prime Minister, the new government, new Assembly, have dug in their heels They're new fresh, they have not had their first session as yet Then I think the situation will emerge But we can see that a certain amount will happen—perhaps (by people in search of) cheap popularity, who will criticise the government only for the sake of doing so Such opposition is everywhere in your country, in my country, elsewhere It is those types of



The Pakistan President with Ronald Reagan on his visit to USA

people who will emerge But I foresee a very small number of such things The majority are sane people and I think they will go along well with the Prime Minister's plans and policies

Q How do you keep in touch with the popular mood? How do you know what the people think?

A I spend 18 hours working and my difficulty is that I find it hard to clear my files, which I get in bundles from the foreign office from others, from the Prime Minister I clear it only at night During the daytime I talk, meet the people Various delegations come to me and I meet the common man I have my eyes and ears open

Q Is there a certain time kept apart for meeting the average Pakistani?

A I'm as accessible as a President can be

Q And isn't the common man terrified of the chief martial law administrator?

A This you should ask somebody else

Q Do they repeat the jokes that they have about you to you?

A Yes, sometimes I hear about it (laughs)

Q One last question which has a bearing on the first one which is you have lasted here for eight years through a very difficult time, do you ever think of yourself as your nation's man of destiny?

A I have never given it a thought, honest to God I've only worked as a part of my duty What destiny has in store what history has in store it has never bothered me What I've done is to do my job honestly and sincerely and to the satisfaction of my own conscience And the day I think I don't have this, I would no longer be on the scene

Pakistan has always said that Pakistan is not concerned with what the United States gives to India, and what India gets from the United States of America: that is a result of the mutual requirements of the two countries.

Akali Hardliners to the Fore?

The new ad hoc committee formed by Bhindranwale's father, Baba Joginder Singh, weakens moderates and strengthens the extremists But, Akali political equations still favour Longowal

Strong winds followed by rain and hail swept Amritsar on the evening of 1 May. And while the city was lashed, 63 year old Baba Joginder Singh, father of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale took the Akali leaders by storm. Nobody had expected him to do what he did—dissolving all the factions of

the Akali Dal in the name of "Panthik unity," and form a new *ad hoc* committee dominated by hardliners. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale had lived in the Golden Temple for about two years and made fiery, emotional speeches to the Sikh masses. His father, on the contrary, entered the Golden Temple unnoticed on the

Inderjeet Singh Khalsa, the general secretary of the newly formed Akali Dal, Baba Joginder Singh, Bhindranwale's father and Didar Singh, the uncle of the late president of the AISSF, Amrik Singh, in a room in the Golden Temple



afternoon of 1 May and after announcing the new *ad hoc* committee—thereby dropping a bombshell—left the premises unannounced.

In the nine member *ad hoc* committee, Baba Joginder Singh included Simranjit Singh Mann, an IPS officer who was dismissed after Operation Bluestar and is currently in jail facing several charges, Harinder Singh, an IFS officer who resigned after Operation Bluestar and took political asylum in Norway, Gurtej Singh, another IAS officer who is underground, Manjit Singh brother of slain AISSF leader Amrik Singh, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, SGPC president Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Prakash Singh Badal. Simranjit Singh Mann was made the convener of the *ad hoc* committee but till the release of Mann, Baba Joginder Singh has himself taken the responsibility for convening the committee. Inderjit Singh Khalsa, a Faridkot based lawyer was made the general secretary of the body.

The formation of the new committee upset the applecart of the moderate Akali leaders, particularly of Sant Longowal, who was working hard to ensure the return of normalcy in Punjab. During his three day visit to Delhi he said that he was against the demand for Khalistan, but at the same time blamed the government for its insincerity in solving the Punjab problem. In all his speeches, Sant Longowal very consciously sought to express the sentiments of the Sikhs, who, he said, were shattered by Operation Bluestar and the riots in November that followed Mrs Gandhi's assassination.

There was complete confusion in the Golden Temple after the declaration of the list of members of the new *ad hoc* committee. Even the *sewadars* of the SGPC were worried about their future. While declaring the new *ad hoc* committee, Baba Joginder Singh had clearly mentioned that Sant Longowal and Jathedar Talwandi had given their resignations to him on 3 April for the sake of 'Panthik unity'. The plea for the resignations of Longowal and Talwandi created more confusion in Sant Longowal's camp. But the next day Sant Longowal boldly announced in Jalandhar that he had never submitted his resignation to anyone. His letter which was handed over to Baba Joginder Singh had only said that for the sake of Panthik unity of the Sikh community, the decision of the Baba was acceptable to him (Longowal). Talwandi also gave a similar letter to Baba but in his letter he had clearly

SPECIAL REPORT

mentioned that he would not accept Sant Longowal as president of the committee.

All hardliners welcomed the formation of the new *ad hoc* committee. They include Talwandi, spokesmen for the AISSF and a few others. Surprisingly, on the morning of 2 May, Prakash Singh Badal was in the Golden Temple complex. And at that time he did not take any decision on this new *ad hoc* committee. He told newsmen that "whatever the party president does or gives, consent to is acceptable to me." People of the Badal faction in Akali politics were also there including Atma Singh and Ujagar Singh Sekhawan, senior vice president of the Akali Dal. It is well known in Akali circles that Badal and Sant Longowal had differences during the election to the presidentship of the SGPC. Badal had opposed the candidature of Tohra, and supported Atma Singh, who lost by a margin of just 19 votes. Sant Longowal had supported Tohra.

In mid-April Atma Singh mooted the idea of a presidium of the Akali Dal. But he was served with a show-cause notice by the Akali Dal president. On 2 May, Atma Singh did not say anything at the Golden Temple complex but after reaching Kapurthala in the afternoon, issued a statement in favour of the new *ad hoc* committee. The same evening, Badal supported Sant Longowal's stand on the new *ad hoc* committee. Sant Longowal was lucky that Tohra too had supported him.

Political observers in Amritsar were watching the fluid situation in the Akali Dal very carefully. Finally, what emerged was a vertical split over the issue of Panthic unity, the moderates on one side and the hardliners on the other.

Most people in the Golden Temple, except for a few hardliners, held the view that the new move in the name of Panthic unity had been initiated by the Congress(I) because the general secretary of the *ad hoc* committee has close links with Congress(I) leaders. Few suspected it to be a move by Jathedar Talwandi, who is against the leadership of Sant Longowal. Even in the third week of March when the high priests wanted Talwandi to merge his faction of the Akali Dal with Akali Dal (Longowal), he held a meeting with his supporters and openly said that he would not merge his party with Sant Longowal's faction despite any amount of pressure. AISSF members had supported his stand at that meeting.

It was generally believed in Pun-

jab that after his release, Sant Longowal had wanted to win over the extremists and hardliners. And as part of that strategy he wrote a letter to Baba Joginder Singh asking for his directions to bring about Panthic unity. Sant Longowal feared people might not accept his leadership because of allegations that he had surrendered to the security forces during Operation Bluestar. But after his Delhi visit and the response he got from the Delhi intelligentsia, he regained his confidence and came out openly against the hardliners. The hardliners wanted Sant Longowal relegated to the background in Akali politics and on the Punjab issue. Had Sant Longowal not taken the bold step he did, his political career in Punjab would definitely have neared its end.

In fact, in the last two months, Sant Longowal had tried to also win over the Sikh youth, who had reacted angrily to Operation Bluestar and the armed forces' operation against Sikh youth. The Sikh youth had not responded well to Sant Longowal's

Baba Joginder Singh, Bhindranwale's father, convener of the Akali Dal *ad hoc* committee



speeches and, at a few places, they even tried to disturb his meetings. On 2 May when a few young men in Amritsar jail got to know about the formation of the new *ad hoc* committee they performed an *ardas* (special prayers) and were happy that Baba Joginder Singh had finally taken over the Akali Dal.

Sant Longowal's bold stand against the new *ad hoc* committee has been welcomed by most of the Akali leaders. Only those who do not like Sant Longowal personally or have a political grudge against him, have supported the hardliners. The Sikh masses in Punjab's villages are confused over the new developments in Akali politics. Sant Longowal has called a meeting of all the Akali Dal members on 17 May in Amritsar to discuss the crisis in the Akali Dal, which has arisen after the formation of the new *ad hoc* committee. The hardliners have also become active; they are trying to get the support of the Sikh masses for their stand. Before 17 May both the moderates and hardliners will propagate their stands to the masses. But Sant Longowal will not only get the support of urban Sikhs but also the Hindus of Punjab. In addition, Tohra and most of his followers have supported Longowal. Half of the followers of Badal will also give him their support. But the followers of Atma Singh will definitely support the new *ad hoc* committee.

Political observers feel that in the weeks to come the role of the union government in Punjab will also decide the future of the Akali leadership. If the government takes a positive stand on the issue of Punjab then Sant Longowal would definitely emerge as the undisputed leader in Akali politics. The hardliners, if they suffer a setback in this political game, might indulge in violence to cause a disturbance. The possibility cannot be ruled out. And in case the government takes a tough stand against extremists, Sant Longowal would have to defend the Sikhs in the name of Panthic unity, otherwise he would be branded a "government agent," and thus be in trouble. The hardliners would then take over and the Punjab situation would remain the same as before. Giving Chandigarh to Punjab, or solving the water and boundary disputes will not solve the Punjab problem. Surprisingly, the high priests, who were at one time advocating Panthic unity, have reserved comment on the new political developments.

Jagmeet Uppal, Amritsar

'Concessions Will Not Solve the Punjab Problem'

Former Punjab CM Prakash Singh Badal tells Jagmeet Uppal

Q After spending nearly 11 months in jail, what do you think of the Punjab problem?

A I am of the opinion that the central government is not interested in solving the Punjab problem. They are not interested in solving it today, nor were they (interested in solving it) in the past. Had they been interested, it could have been solved much earlier. The state, the Khalsa Panth and the country would have been saved.

Q Can you elaborate on why the government is not interested in solving the Punjab problem?

A Actually, they prefer politics. They want to gain politically out of the situation.

Q But if you measure the gain in terms of the Lok Sabha elections which the Congress(I) won with a thumping majority, where does the question of a gain arise now?

A Now the problem is much more complicated. They have to take bold steps. The Punjab problem started with the economic and other demands for the state. Today the problem has changed. It is a problem of the whole Sikh community. The Sikhs are emotionally hurt and by

giving some concessions the government will not be able to solve the Punjab problem. It is a question of emotions and principles of the Sikhs.

Q The centre has taken a few steps last month to normalise the Punjab situation. In your opinion, the centre should take bold steps. What would these bold steps be?

A The demands which have been accepted by the government and the steps it has taken are only an eyewash. These concessions have not affected the minds of the Sikh masses. For example, the government has lifted the ban on the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), but the members of the AISSF have not been released (from detention). The government, in fact, is interested in telling the people of the country and the world that it is really serious about solving the Punjab problem. Had it been serious, the members of the AISSF should have been released soon after lifting the ban. During the Janata regime, when we decided to release the Naxalites, we released all of them whether they had committed a simple crime or more than one murder. The present government should take bold steps, like that.

Q But do you think that if the government takes a few bold steps in the coming weeks, like abolition of special courts, release of the detainees, etc., the Punjab problem will be solved?

A I do not think so. A lot of other things have to be done to solve the Punjab problem.

Q What are these other things?

A This is not the proper time to say what these things should be. If we feel that the government through its behaviour and attitude is serious about solving the problem, we will definitely tell the government what should be done for Punjab.

Q Do you believe the people of Punjab—both Hindus and Sikhs—think about the problem on the same lines as the Akali leaders?

A In my opinion, they do. The problem is clear. The Darbar Sahib and the Golden Temple is the holiest of holy places for the Sikhs and the way its honour and dignity were destroyed, has shattered the Sikhs. It does not mean that only the Akalis have been shattered. The whole Sikh community has been shattered.

Q Do you not think the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee is also in a way responsible for the destruction of the Golden Temple or whatever happened in the Golden Temple?

A I do not think so.

Prakash Singh Badal





Akali Dal president Sant Longowal with some opposition leaders at the residence of I. K. Gujral (right)

Q But aren't all the gurudwaras including the Golden Temple under the control of SGPC? The SGPC could not prevent wanted people from hiding in the Golden Temple and the gurudwaras. Many of them possessed unlicensed arms.

A The SGPC has a limited area of control. The state government is in control of the whole state. Whatever happened during those days, except for one or two incidents, they occurred outside the gurudwaras. Why did the government not take adequate measures to control them?

Q It is believed that the Akali Dal never encouraged Sikh youths and that is why the AISSF members were closer to Bhindranwale than the Akali Dal. Why is the Akali Dal taking such a great interest in the release of the AISSF members?

A The Akali Dal is the party which looks after the interests of the minority community (the Sikhs). So, whatever happens to the Sikhs, the Akali Dal has to look after them.

Q What do you have to say about the judicial inquiry ordered by the centre into the Delhi riots?

A As I have said earlier, the government is not sincere. If it was, an inquiry would have been ordered immediately after the riots. And, why an inquiry into the Delhi riots only? There should have been inquiries into the riots which took place in other cities as well. The aggrieved party—the Sikhs—should have been consulted before announcing the terms of reference of the inquiry.

Q What do you think of the formation of the nine member ad hoc committee of the Akali Dal by Baba Joginder Singh, father of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale?

A I have nothing much to say. But I want to make one thing clear. I am a soldier of the party and I will obey the decisions of the party president.

Q Is it true that Sant Longowal, the Akali Dal president, has given a written assurance to Baba Joginder Singh that he would accept whatever decisions the Baba takes?

A I do not know much about what you are telling me. After my release from jail I have met Sant Longowal once and we have not discussed everything.

Q You have also been made one of the members of the ad hoc committee.

A I do not know much about this either. The first time I went to Amritsar after my release I was told about this ad hoc committee.

Q Have you ever met Baba Joginder Singh?

A No, I have never met him. After my release I visited the Darbar Sahib. I will meet other people including Sant Longowal in future.

Q Do you think the Akal Takht should be demolished and rebuilt?

A The views of the SGPC president, the high priests, etc. have already appeared. In fact, I have no authority on this. Only the Sharbat Khalsa, the high priests, the SGPC and others can take a decision on this and that will be acceptable to all of us.

Q Will the Akali Dal contest if the government announces elections in Punjab?

A It is too early to comment on this. Let them announce the elections, then we will think it over. All the Akali MLAs resigned two years ago and at present we are out of the democratic system.

Q Do you think that the Prime Minister's announcement at Husainiwala a few weeks ago on the promotion of economy in the state will help the people of Punjab?

A There is no proposal for the Thein dam in the budget. It was initially a Rs 300 crore project, now it is a Rs 700 crore project. The government will not complete it in a year or two. It will take ten years and more than Rs 1,000 crores to complete the project. Punjab has been discriminated against and only a few central projects have been given to the state. Even in the projects which Punjab got, the people of the state have not got employment. Take for instance the Bhatinda Fertiliser Plant. Ninety per cent of the workers in the plant are not from Punjab. All the projects should be employment oriented for the people of Punjab.

Q Why do you think politics can not be separated from religion in Punjab?

A It is our tradition.

Q Only Sikhs are the Akali Dal's members. Don't you think the Dal is a communal party?

A It is not a communal party. In our government there were so many Hindu ministers. We even had a Muslim MLA.

Extremism by Design

For the Akali leader Prakash Singh Badal, being a hardliner now is the only way to survive in politics

Political survival is most important for every politician. A journalist friend of the former Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal once observed: "For his political survival, Badal can go to any extent. He will be the first Akali leader to give a call for Khalistan as soon as he realises that it is essential for his political survival." Badal, known to be a moderate among the Akali leaders, was so agitated after Operation Bluestar that at a party meeting on 10 June last year in Chandigarh, he made an impassioned appeal that the Akali Dal should give a call for Khalistan. Badal's suggestion was, however, not accepted by a majority of the party leaders who attended the 10 June meeting. But this did not deter Badal from issuing a "highly provocative" statement jointly with Surjit Singh Barnala, former union minister in the Morarji Desai government, on 11 June 1984. The next morning both the leaders were arrested from their homes in Chandigarh while they were planning to leave for Delhi for an interview with the BBC.

But today, after his 11-month detention, Badal looks a changed man. His stay in Panchmari jail in Madhya Pradesh has made him a bitter man. Although he is not agitated, he seems to be in a dilemma. His predicament was best captured in a cartoon in the Chandigarh *Tribune* which depicted a morose Badal brooding in front of a board on which two quotes were written. One was by Longowal ("Government out to finish Sikhs") and the other was by Tohra ("Akal Takht to be rebuilt"). In the cartoon Badal was saying: "Now it is my turn, what shall I say?"

The Akali leader had reached his Chandigarh residence on the night of 26 April after his release from the Madhya Pradesh jail. The same day, the *Tribune* published the cartoon. Badal addressed a press conference. It was a crowded press conference and the former Punjab chief minister began it in the typical style of an Akali leader. He said: "Sikhs have played the most significant role in the freedom of the country. They

made the maximum sacrifices. It is unfortunate that the community which gave so much for the country was discriminated against immediately after independence." He then continued his rhetoric with Operation Bluestar and the anti-Sikh riots. He argued: "The confidence of the Sikhs in the government stands totally shattered today. How can we have faith in a government which attacked the Akal Takht and the Hari Mandir Sahib, the two holiest of holy places of the Sikhs and then hatched a conspiracy to kill and loot and burn alive innocent Sikhs and rape their women? The attack on the Golden Temple is the greatest tragedy of the world and the scars of the June army action in the Hari Mandir Sahib and the November riots will remain permanently in our hearts."

But the pressmen present wanted him to comment on the current situation and on subjects like the assassination of Mrs Gandhi and the glorification of her assassins by his party colleagues. The former chief minis-

Sikhs in Delhi demonstrate against Sant Longowal's visit



ter was non-committal on virtually every controversial subject. Obviously the newsmen were disappointed. They had already heard and reported a lot on the events following Operation Bluestar and the November riots. They wanted something new from Prakash Singh Badal but he was not clear about the steps he would like the government to take to bring about normalcy in Punjab. He said he would like the government to take the "most liberal and bold steps" but was unable to spell out what these steps would be.

However, when Badal was asked if he thought the November 1984 riots were a part of the emotional outburst of the people following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, he was flabbergasted. After a meditated pause he said: "No, the November riots were preplanned. It was a conspiracy of the ruling party and the government." Later he parried questions on the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. It was obvious that Badal like his other Akali party colleagues was not ready to condemn the murder of the late Prime Minister. Explained a Punjab watcher, "How can Badal condemn the killing of Mrs Gandhi? That will amount to signing his political death warrant. If he is to survive in Sikh politics today, he will have to speak in the language of Bhindranwale who is the real hero of the Sikhs now."

When approached by SUNDAY for his comments on Bhindranwale, Badal was non-committal. It is a fact acknowledged too well in Akali circles that Badal hated the militant Sikh leader the most. In fact, the animosity between the two was such that both never spoke or greeted each other. Today, Badal does not know where to go. As the only Akali leader who is respected by the Hindus of Punjab, he cannot afford to take a militant posture since he knows well that without the support of the Bharatiya Janata Party, he stands no chance of forming a government in Punjab.

On the other hand, he has also started realising that the Sikhs in the state do not fancy moderate Akali leaders any more. The merger of the opposing factions in the Akali Dal into one unit to be managed by a nine-member ad hoc committee as announced in a sudden political development by Joginder Singh, father of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in Amritsar on 1 May, though rejected by the Akali chief Sant Harchand Singh Longowal the next day, is perhaps the first major step in the direction of challenging the moderate Akali leaders like Badal in the state.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

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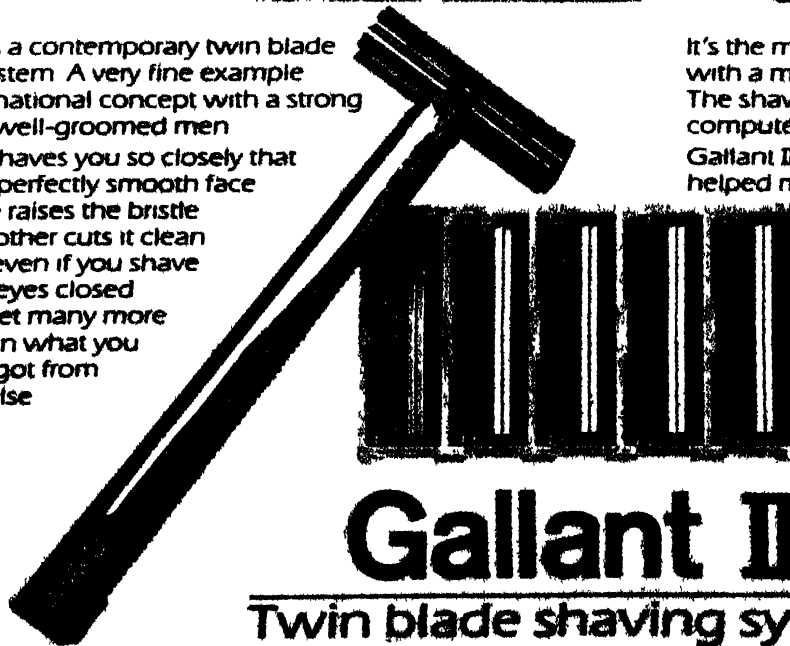
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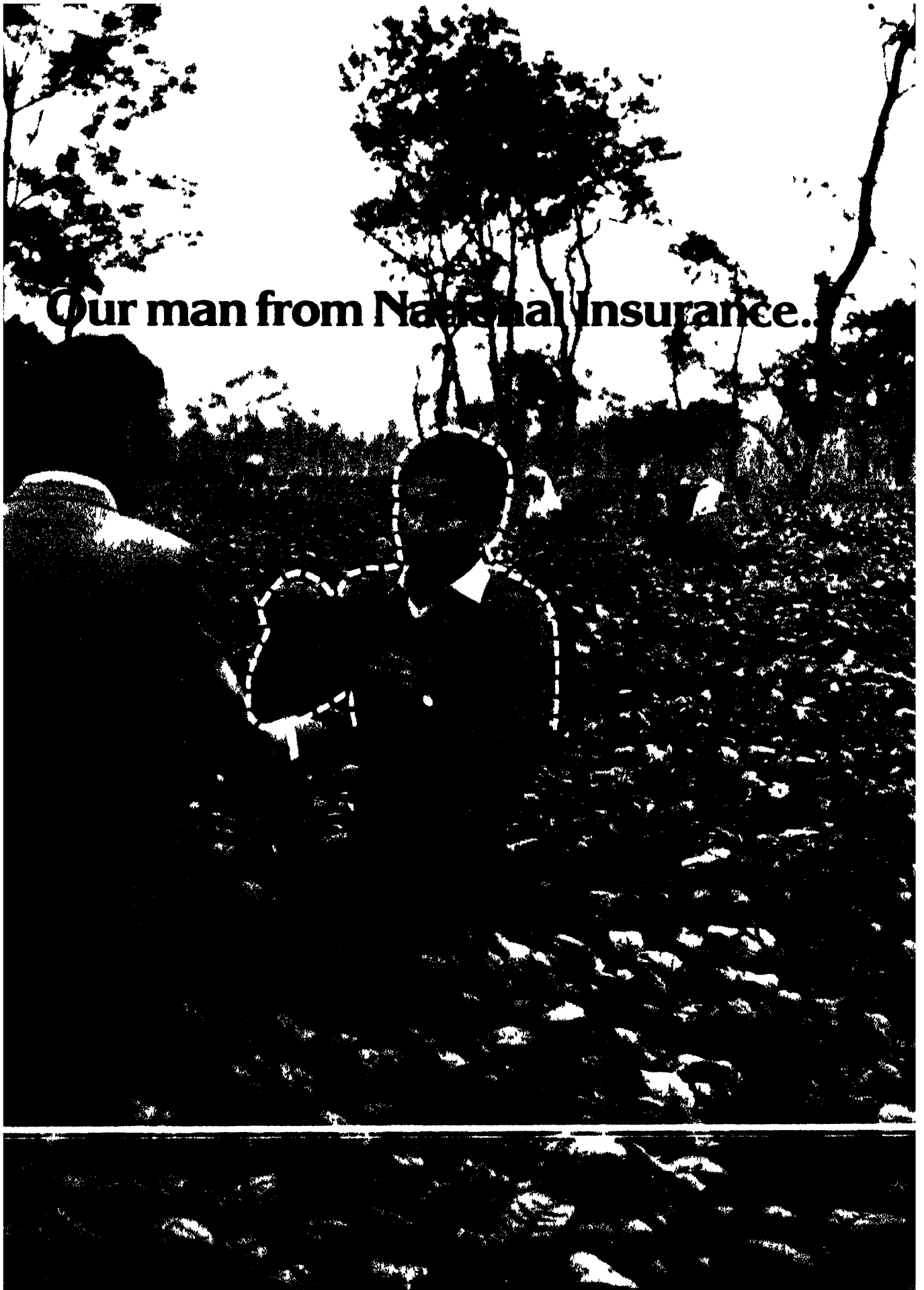
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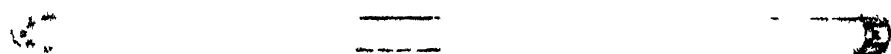
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Charles Sobhraj's trials and tribulations are far from over

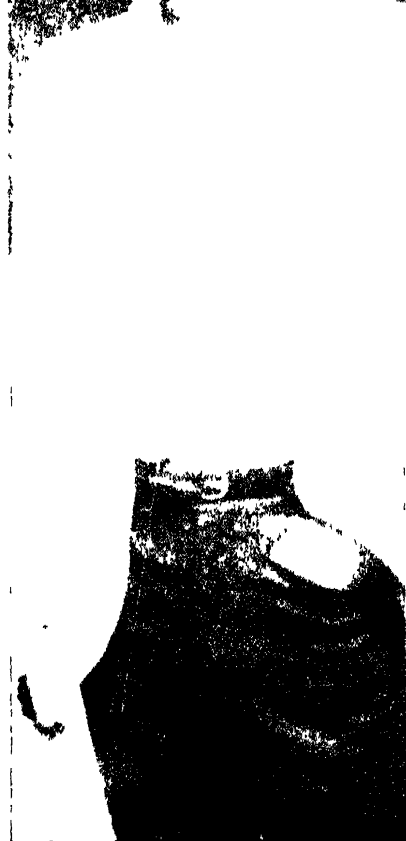
Charles Sobhraj returned to Delhi's Tees Hazari courts after eight years. On 5 July 1977, a year after his sensational arrest in the capital, Sobhraj had walked into the courts to face the sentence for the trail of crimes he had committed in India. That day Sobhraj had made a dramatic entrance into the courtroom. The news of his arrest had been flashed around the world and the Indian police had taken pride in closing the dragnet on one of the 20th century's most dreaded criminals. On that day the flamboyant French national had faced the packed dusty court, surrounded by dozens of armed guards, chained down from his ankles. He was pinned down, at last, like a petty criminal. After hoodwinking the police for over two decades Sobhraj was caught.

Eight years of captivity in Indian jails have not changed the criminal status of Sobhraj. When he walked into the same Tees Hazari courts on 29 April this year, Sobhraj was a free man in India: all nine criminal cases against him in India had been tried and the proceedings concluded. From being a wanted criminal in India, Sobhraj was now a fugitive criminal. He was still wanted for crimes in other parts of the world. Though, at the time of his arrest in 1976, Sobhraj was wanted in Paris, Beirut, Kathmandu, Hong Kong and Saigon besides other cities, it was the government of Thailand which had requested for his extradition after his release from Karwar jail in Karnataka. The imposing iron gates of the prison opened and Sobhraj was handed over a warrant of arrest with orders to proceed to New Delhi where charges against him in Thailand would be examined. The anticipated days of freedom, which Sobhraj had already told his friends and jailers, would be spent in India, saw him once again behind bars.

The government machinery had set itself in motion as the days of Sobhraj's release from Karwar jail came close. Interpol had been alerted and a fresh warrant of arrest issued. The warrant issued to the jail superintendent of Karwar jail named Sobhraj alias Alain Gautier alias Daniel Chaunet as a "fugitive criminal" wanted in connection with a series of crimes in Thailand. The

warrant stated, 'The said Charles Sobhraj is facing trial in a criminal case No 272/79 of Karwar and is lodged in the district jail, Karwar, Karnataka, now Therefore, in extradition of persons under Section 6 of the Extradition Act of 1962, this open warrant of arrest is issued.'

The warrant for Sobhraj had been renewed by the Interpol regularly, so that he would not be able to escape captivity. At the Karwar jail, a police escort despatched from New Delhi



Charles Gurmukh Sobhraj

waited to take Sobhraj to the capital and present him before the chief metropolitan magistrate. When Sobhraj was handed over to the officials of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the superintendent of Karwar jail informed New Delhi about his release. In a wireless message No JC/3/2162/85, the chief metropolitan magistrate Subhash Wason was informed: "The under-trial prisoner Charles Sobhraj has been handed over to police escort party at Belgaum at 4.45 pm on 25 April 1985 with a direction to produce him before your court as required under open warrant of arrest issued on 21 March 1985." The message sent, Sobhraj began his journey to the capital in an armed convoy. Earlier, he had been declared medically fit to undertake the journey and had been granted permission by the magistrate to spend Rs 92.65 on his way to Tihar central jail.

The 41-year-old fugitive criminal walked into the court of the chief metropolitan magistrate a few days later escorted by heavily armed guards of the Delhi police and inspectors of the CBI. This time, however, Sobhraj was alone. A few years ago, when he had visited the courts, there was excitement about his arrival for Sobhraj had arrived with his accomplices, Marie Andree Leclerc and Jean D. Luisime, who had been implicated with him in several cases. The courtroom had then been packed with people and mediamen from all over the world anxious to see the immaculately dressed Frenchman. Last month, few knew who the visibly thinned and slightly balding criminal was. Except for the sprinkling of Indian pressmen and the large posse of policemen who were escorting Sobhraj, his return went largely unnoticed.

The charges faced by Sobhraj in Thailand are still not known and, in fact, Sobhraj's lawyers feel the government of Thailand may not have substantial evidence against him. Sobhraj himself had told authors of an autobiographical book, *Life and Crimes of Charles Sobhraj*, Richard Neville and Julie Clarke, in the course of an interview: "In the unlikely event I will ever appear in court in Thailand, I will deny everything." Now Sobhraj has contacted

A Celebrated Criminal

Charles Gurmukh Sobhraj alighted from the familiar blue police van. Quietly, languidly, he walked the few yards to the Karwar district court, followed, almost respectfully by a posse of policemen. It was 10.30 am on the morning of Saturday 20 April, and Sobhraj, impeccably dressed, looked pensive. An hour later, the Karwar district magistrate, B.N. Balakrishna read out the judgement in a case in which Sobhraj was charged with drugging and robbing three French nationals in Karwar, a decade ago.

Charles Sobhraj, in many ways, has been a celebrated criminal in recent times. Born of an Indian father and a Vietnamese mother, he has left a trail of sensational crimes across many countries in the course of a flamboyant and spectacular life. Not even a decade in Indian jails appears to have broken his spirit. On this warm summer morning, Sobhraj was dressed immaculately in a light blue coat and dark trousers. His dark hair, combed back, revealed a receding hairline, and his eyes were steady behind dark glasses. But for the policemen who hovered around him, Sobhraj may well have been mistaken for a lawyer.

He strolled casually into the room of the court superintendent, and presented him with a copy of his book *Serpentine*. When he was approached by journalists for a chat, Sobhraj quickly answered, "Where? Shall we talk here or outside?" "You see," he drawled, "I have become quite famous after I wrote the book *Serpentine*. The other book *Life and Crimes of Charles Sobhraj* is being published by Pan Books. I think I am going to be writing a lot in future." Sobhraj also revealed that he was going to

write a novel that is aimed at exposing the Indian legal system. The story will revolve around two sisters who are caught in the meshes of the dowry system. He is also negotiating with an Australian reporter working with *Sunday Times* London, who is interested in writing his biography.

When asked about the judgement he would hear a few minutes later, "Oh that," he said quite cheerfully, in a voice which has traces of a French accent. "It is going to be a case of acquittal," he said. There was no doubt in his voice. And after that? He has to fight the extradition proceedings and seems well prepared to do so. "The Indian government wanted to pack me off to Thailand twice before. But the Delhi court rejected the government's plea both times on the grounds that there was no request from the Thai government. This time there may be a request through diplomatic channels, but I cannot be extradited under the law since it prevents extradition of a fugitive who has been detained for more than three months under Section nine of the Extradition Act of 1968."

Charles Sobhraj is well versed in the Indian legal code. He even argued his own case. At 11.30 am, the court clerk called for Charles Sobhraj. The small courtroom was crammed with young lawyers. From the dock, Sobhraj bowed gently before the magistrate. Even before Mr Balakrishna took up the judgement papers, Sobhraj began speaking, bringing to the notice of the court a "serious incident" in the Karwar jail in the early hours of 18 April. A woman prisoner had been raped and Sobhraj wanted the magistrate to take up the case. Mr Balakrishna asked Sobhraj to file a petition. He then took up the judg-

ment papers.

For a moment, Sobhraj appeared tense. But as the magistrate began reading the operative portions of the 75-page judgement, Sobhraj relaxed and towards the end was smiling appreciatively. The judgement was flowery and verbose. It said: "The evidence led in by the prosecution is not sufficient to connect the accused with the offence. There may be an element of truth in the prosecution's story against the accused. But between 'may be true' and 'must be true' there is an inevitable long distance to be traversed and the whole of this distance must be covered by the prosecution with legal, reliable and unimpeachable evidence...The investigation in a case of this nature should be like a spider's web, leaving no exit for the real culprit to slip away. I have no option in this case except to hold that the accused is entitled to be acquitted and order the accused be acquitted for the offences charged under section 120B, 328, 392 and 368 of the IPC and Section 14 of the Foreigners Act..."

By noon on 20 April, Sobhraj was acquitted of drugging and robbing three French nationals. It was his ninth case on Indian soil and nothing had been proved against him in any one of the cases. But Sobhraj was a free man only for a moment. As he came out of the court premises, he was arrested again, on orders from the Delhi metropolitan magistrate in connection with the extradition proceedings. The 41-year old Sobhraj, who was aware of the impending arrest, took it calmly. He had done almost nine years in Indian jails and will be going back to Delhi now.

A Special Correspondent, Bangalore

his lawyers to examine the charges faced by him in that country.

Details of criminal charges faced by Sobhraj in Thailand were received by the Indian authorities on 22 August 1984. There are other documents too which will provide the evidence against Sobhraj and they are presently lying in a sealed envelope with the chief metropolitan magistrate. They will be examined only when the extradition proceedings commence. The request for his extradition has been made by the Thai government for charges of mur-

der, attempt to murder, theft and recovering stolen property, forgery and using forged documents. The warrant of arrest was issued by Gen. Montchai Pankongchwen, deputy director-general, Thai police department on 20 May 1976. The warrant has been issued under criminal code B.E. 2477, Article 58 of the Thai police law which states: "When arrested, the subject is to be turned over to the Royal Thai police department. He is to be brought to trial within 20 years (from 16 December 1975 to 15 December 1995)."

When Sobhraj was arrested in New Delhi in 1976 there were a dozen criminal charges ranging from murder, attempted murder, drugging, forgery and attempted forgery against him. He was wanted for the sensational Asoka hotel robbery case of 1971, after which he had managed to escape from the clutches of the Indian police from a hospital in Bombay. He was charged with the murder of a French national Tete Bruno and another foreigner, Luke Solomon. Sobhraj was expected to be detained in Indian prisons for up to 15 years.

After the extradition request was received, the Indian authorities had first to ascertain whether the crimes committed by Sobhraj abroad were cognisable in India and whether the Indian government could allow Sobhraj to be extradited on those charges to Thailand. In a letter to the chief metropolitan magistrate, P.R. Thakur, the joint secretary in the ministry of external affairs (No S/413/12/76) informed that the Extradition Act of 1962 has been made applicable to Thailand with effect from 17 May 1982 and that the government of Thailand should depute a police officer from Bangkok to proceed with the extradition case against Charles Sobhraj.

When the request was made by the Thai government, extradition proceedings were initiated against both Charles Sobhraj and his Canadian girlfriend, Marie Andree, who also faced charges of attempted murder, forgery and using forged documents. Marie Andree was arrested along with Sobhraj in 1976 when they were drugging French tourists in Vikram hotel. She was awaiting trial in Tihar jail when it was discovered that she had cancer. She was allowed to leave India for treatment in 1983. After a year in hospital in Canada, Marie



Charles Sobhraj being led to court in New Delhi

Andree died. The high commission of India at Ottawa, Canada, informed the Indian authorities that extradition cases could be terminated because she had died.

Even after his arrest and subsequent captivity in Indian jails, Charles Sobhraj succeeded in keeping up his reputation as the most diabolic and fascinating criminal. In March 1978, he won a court action to have his chains and leg-irons removed while he was confined to his

cell. He took legal action in France to oppose the granting of custody of his only child, Madhu, to his first wife, Chantal. Later he married an American writer, Shireen Walker, inside his prison cell. He continued to be at the receiving end of media attention and is already the subject of several books. He has already been approached by prominent Hollywood producers to be allowed to film the criminal record of Alain Gautier.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

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SUNDAY 12-18 MAY 1985

The Controversial Pipeline

Snam Progetti, an Italian firm, has manipulated a government contract in its favour

Technological cooperation between India and Italy dates back to the Fifties. But the scenario has changed today: the presence of Italian firms in India had never been so deeply resented then. Before the Maruti-Suzuki craze set in, the Italian Fiat, manufactured by Premier Automobiles was considered the better car available within the country. Lambretta and Vespa, the two popular makes of scooters, too, were the products of the cooperation. The climate, however, changed suddenly in 1980. Rajiv Gandhi's marriage to Sonia Maino of Italy had not created any ripples in the Indian public opinion till all of a sudden in 1980 an Italian firm, Snam Progetti, managed to manipulate decisions in New Delhi in its favour. Snam Progetti had been associated with India since the 1960s but the award of the contracts for the Thal Vaishet Fertiliser Plant of the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd in 1980 suddenly saw Snam Progetti in the centre of a controversy. The award of the turnkey contract for the 1,719 km-long Hazira-Bijaipur-Jagdishpur (HBJ) gas pipeline, by which gas from the Bombay High will be taken to fertiliser units located in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, has again shot Snam Progetti into the limelight. The government of Rajiv Gandhi has faced its first scathing criticism in the press and in Parliament due to the HBJ pipeline contract.

Why is the Snam Progetti deal being criticised? Its Delhi representative, Ottavio Quattrocchi, who has been in India for the past 16 years, is known as a close family friend of Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi. The intimacy of the friendship can be judged from the fact that on several occasions in the recent years when the Maino family had visited India, they had stayed as guests of Quattrocchi in his house at 63, Friends Colony in South Delhi. Quattrocchi, according to allegations made by Members of Parliament, has been enjoying considerable clout in New Delhi and has been able to influence government decisions in his favour due to his connections with the Prime Minister's family. In the Rajya

Sabha, while Suresh Kalmadi has referred to the HBJ deal as being an issue of "in-laws and outlaws" (referring to the in-laws in Italy), Shyam Sundar Mohapatra, former AICC(I) general secretary who was expelled from the party last year, has charged that Quattrocchi has been holding ministers to "ransom." On 30 April, initiating a call attention motion on the subject, Mohapatra said, "A previous minister, who is no more in the ministry told me that Mr Quattrocchi used to dictate terms to the ministers and secretaries." The fact that the resident director of Snam Progetti was a powerful person has been the subject of many whispers in the corridors of power. Last year, after Rajiv Gandhi dropped some ministers of the Indira Gandhi cabinet after taking over, one of the dropped ministers had narrated to this correspondent his experience with Ottavio Quattrocchi. According to him, one day he received a phone call from an aide of Rajiv Gandhi, then an AICC(I) general secretary, asking him to meet Quattrocchi. The caller wanted the minister to meet the Italian businessman some time in the afternoon that day. As the minister had invited a state Governor for lunch, he informed the caller that he certainly would meet Quattrocchi, but not that day. He asked the caller to inform Quattrocchi that he would be given an appointment provided Quattrocchi telephoned the minister's office. But within half-an-hour Quattrocchi arrived at the minister's residence. Apparently after having asked the Rajiv Gandhi aide to phone the minister, assuming that he never was turned down, the Snam representative had driven over to the minister's home. The minister had no option but to disrupt his lunch with the Governor and talk to the Italian businessman.

Neither Italy, nor Snam Progetti had been criticised in the Fifties, Sixties or the Seventies. The difference in the Eighties has been the Quattrocchi factor. Apparently some people have mastered the game of name dropping. And their activities, though not entirely imperceptible, have been allowed to go on. If the Rajiv Gandhi government is being

criticised for the HBJ deal today, then the Quattrocchi factor is to blame. But the fact is that Snam and Quattrocchi had got away with the Thal Vaishet deal in 1980, when bypassing the recommendations of not one but two secretarial committees (including a review committee) Haldor Topsoe, a Snam subsidiary was awarded the contract. When K.P. Unnikrishnan exposed the Thal Vaishet deal in the Lok Sabha, by placing incriminating official files on the table of the House, no one took notice of the daylight robbery which was laid threadbare. What did the press, which is crying hoarse over the HBJ deal, do when the Thal Vaishet scandal broke? With the exception of dailies like *Business Standard*, most sections of the media took a cavalier attitude. Instead of exposing the deal, they went along with the government propaganda that "spying" was going on: a former sheriff of Bombay, Narendra Kapadia, his nephew Nanak Sheth (son of a distinguished retired civil servant) and a host of other employees of Protos Engineering (who represented the US firm, C.F. Braun, which had been selected initially by the high-powered committees and then suddenly left out in the cold) are till today facing prosecution under the Official Secrets Act. The charge against them is that they stole the files which were placed by Unnikrishnan in the Lok Sabha. (There is a Speaker's ruling in Parliament, given when a series of exposures had been made in the Fifties and the Sixties by Feroze Gandhi, Homi Daji and S.M. Banerji, which justifies the stealing of government files for the purposes of exposures in Parliament. Apparently the Feroze Gandhi spirit was sought to be curbed in the Lok Sabha when the Thal Vaishet prosecutions were launched). Had the warning of Thal Vaishet been heeded to by the government, then the HBJ furore could have been avoided.

What are the implications of the HBJ deal? A decision was taken in September 1984, during the last days of the Indira Gandhi regime, that the prestigious pipeline project

INVESTIGATION

Snam Progetti's gain in the HBJ pipeline could spell doom for the plans of many Indian firms. The eight-month old GAIL has been busy employing personnel who have expertise in the field of laying pipelines. The turnkey decision will make these recruitments unnecessary. The Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has been busy acquiring knowhow for the supply and installation of



Map showing the HBJ pipeline route

The first of the six fertiliser plants at Bijaipur in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh is likely to be ready by the end of 1985. The way the decision regarding the HBJ deal is being changed, it is unlikely that the pipeline would be ready by the time the Bijaipur unit is completed. (In the original schedule, given by the EIL GAIL combine, the pipeline was to be ready before the Bijaipur plant was operative. Then the criticism was that the Hazira Bijaipur section of the pipeline would lie unutilised for a while. Now it is reverse: the fertiliser plant would suffer instead.) The ambitious plans of taking Bombay High gas to Uttar Pradesh to run fertiliser plants at Bijaipur, Sawaimadhopur, Jagdishpur (in Raipur Gandhi's constituency, Amethi),

The HBJ project however is not the first instance of self reliance being neglected. The projects and designs division of the Fertiliser Corporation at Sindri had faced similar experience some years ago. The Rajiv Gandhi regime is not the only culprit in this regard. One of the first decisions of the Janata government's steel minister, Biju Patnaik in March 1977 was to reverse the decision on the second cold rolling mill of the Bokaro Steel Plant. Self reliance was given the go by and under the Janata minister's orders, an American mill was put at the Soviet aided Bokaro plant. In the days of the Janata government the protection and the preference enjoyed by public sector units in the country was done away with. The public sector was told to "compete". While competition is a healthy trend, having spent government's resources to set up an unit, is it prudent to starve it of orders just for the sake of "competition". The instance of the Gas Authority of India, which within eight months of its existence has been hit by "competition" best highlights the plight of the Indian public sector today.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

SPECIAL REPORT



Bind (sitting in the centre) and his gang photographed in their hideout in January 1985

Is Mohan Bind Dead?

Quite, say the Bihar police though few believe them

Around 8 pm on 30 April, a brief wireless message beamed out from the Adhaura police station at the foot of the dacoit-infested Kaimur range in Bihar's Rohtas district: "A number of criminals have escaped with the body of Mohan Bind and burnt it at a spot 28 kms east of Sarki village. His bones, a burnt silver ring and a length of burnt string were recovered from the spot. These articles have also been identified by the villagers." No police officer could say how exactly the bandit with an award of Rs 25,000 on his head had been killed. The police had not shot him, but they were certain he was dead. For the record, there is nothing to prove this. Was the encounter staged to enable Bind to re-enter normal life without facing the law? Chances are that no one will ever know.

Mohan Bind was a dreaded name in Rohtas. A 36-year-old former road-building contractor who had tried hard to lead a lawful life but found himself unable to suffer injustice at the hands of a set of unscrupulous *mahajans* (moneylenders) and *thekedars* (middlemen), he took to

terror to have his way. For four years, that was how he 'ruled' Rohtas, a black cane in one hand and a whip in the other—never a gun. No forest *thekedars* (who buy forest produce from tribals and sell them in the towns) could do business in the area without his regal 'protection'—which meant a handsome cut of the profits—and no poor man needed to go to a lawcourt or the police for justice; all he had to do was hand over a chit to Mohan Raja and the prayer would be answered. If Raja Babu had to kill, he always borrowed a gun from an associate. And though the police dispute the fact that the bandit was a man of unsullied character—they accuse him of being a habitual rapist—two journalists who met him in the hills in January 1985 confirm that he had great respect for women, and always helped the poor. To the people of Rohtas, the poor and downtrodden, he was popular as a dogooder, affectionately called Mohan Raja or Raja Babu. He belonged to a low caste (Binds are boatmen) and saw Rajput and Brahmin landlords as his arch enemies.

Bind's death is shrouded in mystery, in spite of the police's version of

the incident. According to Bihar's DIG (anti-dacoity), K.D. Singh, Bind had a concubine named Chhoti Devi, who is the sister of Hardul Prasad alias Bhairul Prasad. Chhoti Devi's daughter was to get married on 29 April, and it was to make arrangements for the marriage that Bind and his gang had reached the village of Sarki, under the Adhaura police station. "Recently," the DIG said, "one of Bind's chief lieutenants, Hakim Miya and four of his associates had been killed by the villagers. Bind chose not to enter the village but stay at a safe distance, in the outskirts." Bind and his gang were given food by the villagers and they spent the night of 27 April at the spot outside the village where they camped. That night, three of the bandit's own associates, who were spying for the police, shot Bind. The rest of the gang thought it to be a police attack.

They retreated, took cover in a ditch and fired back at the attackers. But there was no counterfire. After an hour or so, when they still found no sign of retaliation, they rushed to the spot where they had camped, found Bind in a pool of blood, carried him on a cot for some distance, "but when

SPECIAL REPORT

they found him dead, they abandoned the cot and carried away the dead body" Mr Singh said, "Police, on receiving information, reached the place of occurrence (PO) and from the vicinity of the PO recovered one police rifle, one DBBL English gun, one SBBL countrymade gun, large quantities of live and empty ammunition, and a good quantity of medicines being used by the gang. There was also a lot of blood around. Blood was also found in the line of retreat. It has been established beyond doubt that Mohan Bind has died." The police, Mr Singh said, had examined the blood before reaching this conclusion. Two members of the gang were arrested in suspicious circumstances.

The articles recovered from the spot include six 12 bore live cartridges, eighteen 12 bore empty cartridges, eight 303 empty cartridges, 23 rifle cartridges, five 315 cartridges, in addition to a suit, a pair of chappals, bedcovers etc., a bag with a huge quantity of different types of medicines, two foam leather belts with cartridges and two jerricans containing some liquor.

Following the recovery of these articles, a series of police raids were made in the jungles nearby. The area was scoured for the body. Mr Singh himself had not received information about any 'remains' recovered, despite the wireless message from Adhaura: "We want to capture the body in whatever state it is," he said, "but I am definite about one thing, that he has been killed."

Most of the villagers gave the gang food, Mr Singh said, not because they loved Mohan Bind, but out of fear. "The sarpanch of Sarki, Punarwasi Yadav, for instance, had helped the gang for fear of his life," he said. Yadav had later confirmed Bind's death to the police.

What is the legal position on the bandit's death? Does the police have to establish his death with enough supportive evidence? "Nobody has yet lodged a complaint in a police station saying that he has been killed by a specific or unknown person. So all the facts relating to his death have been put into the station diary. At some point of time, his wife may come and say that he has been killed. If we have some facts on record, later on we can go in for a case and arrest the accused. The law has to follow its own course, because, after all a human life has been lost, whether he be a dacoit or somebody else," Mr Singh said. Till now, our inquiries reveal that he has been killed," he added. "But to prove that conclusively in a court of law, we will have to present evidence—portions of his

dead body, identification marks. This is an expert's job."

Bind was a man of medium height, and wheatish complexion. According to police records, his gang, about 40 strong, operated largely in Sasaram, Rohtas, Chenari, Chand, Bhagwanpur, Bhabua and Nauhatta blocks. The only photograph still in the possession of the police is a file picture, about three years old. Two young journalists who had met him in January 1985 affirm that he is not the sexual pervert the police make him out to be. Although he has been involved with women, he would protect their honour and often avenge rape on behalf of the victim. A



Mohan Bind

legend in Sasaram, Mohan Raja also inspired great confidence among the local population who went out of their way to help him and never divulged information about him to the police, despite repeated questioning—which made tracking him difficult.

The two journalists, photographer Krishan Murari Kishan and Ravivar's Patna correspondent, Vikas Kumar Jha, had managed to establish contact with the bandit after just one visit to a village near the hills. They were lucky enough to have got in touch with the right person—a *thekedar*—in a tea stall where they spent several days, waiting for a clue to the location of the gang. The

thekedar knew Bind well—as all *thekedars* in the Kaimur hills must, thanks to the bandit's 'protection', and eventually managed to spend a night with the gang and interview Bind, besides taking a lot of exclusive photographs (printed with this story).

Both Jha and Kishan believe the bandit is definitely alive. The reason, they say, is that some articles which Bind always carried with him were never found by the police—a black cane and a hunter, besides a number of papers in his bag. "Bind never wore a silver ring but one made of gold, with a stone embedded in it," Kishan recalled.

Mohan Bind was also a devout Shiva worshipper. He shot into notoriety first with the massacre of seven persons in Darigwan on 6 November 1981. Kidnapping for ransom was one of his major sources of money. A constant irritant to him for long was his old enemy Dharamdeo Kharwar, who led a dozen strong gang in the Kaimur hills. Kharwar had escaped from the Bhabua jail on 20 May 1983 and killed Satrugan Bhai of the Banwasi Seva Kendra and kidnapped Raj Kumar Choubey of Bhagwanpur, who was later released for a ransom of Rs 3,600 and four quintals of rice. Owing to constant friction between Bind and Kharwar, Bind became an enemy of the entire Kharwar (a tribal caste) community in the area. Late in 1984, Kharwar's gang killed two of Bind's associates. In retaliation, Bind set fire to three houses of a Kharwar village. Ten people were burnt alive. People deserted the village in panic. Later, Kharwar and a few members of his gang were killed by villagers. There was an award of Rs 20,000 on his head. For quite some time, the police seemed more keen on capturing Kharwar than Bind, because his escape from prison was an insult to them. Another gangster Ramashish Bind, Mohan Bind's predecessor, was also a major police irritant. With his death, too, Mohan Bind grew into the most redoubtable gangster of Rohtas.

"We have viewed him as a terror in the Kaimur hills who worked in an almost impenetrable area," said the IG (CID) S N Roy. "There is a road up to Adhaura only, although the area is not so inhospitable now. But Bind had become more important after the death of Kharwar and his associates. We were about to launch a full scale drive against him. Now it is not necessary. But we want to ensure that no one takes his mantle. We hear he has a father, or uncle somewhere."

Nirmal Mitra, Sasaram

AICC(I) SESSION

Following a Socialist Path

Rajiv Gandhi reaffirms the importance of the public sector

From 6 December 1980 to 4 May 1985, the history of the 100 year old Congress movement had recorded many upheavals. Rajiv Gandhi had attended the All India Congress Committee session of the Congress(I), held at New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium, as a special invitee on 6 December 1980. In the same venue on 4 May, he sat in the presidential seat and his election as the Congress(I) president by the Congress Working Committee on 12 November 1984 was approved by the session with thunderous applause. In the period between the two AICC(I) sessions held at the Talkatora stadium, many things have changed. The most noticeable change was the lack of interest in the proceedings shown by the delegates. The attendance was poor by AICC session standards.

In fact, in the late hours of 4 May, when Rajiv Gandhi and his entourage left the session around 7.00 pm, there was hardly anyone present to listen to the speeches. Lack of inner party discussions have apparently taken their toll on the Congress(I).

While this party is the largest and the most representative political organisation in the country, politics of nomination and the resultant shunning of organisational elections have made it a mute body. Before the AICC session began, there was talk of "open criticism" of the party's functioning. While many Congressmen admit in private conversations that there was much to be desired in the party's functioning, none have the political courage to speak the truth when given a forum. The AICC session's first day, therefore went off without any highlights being recorded.

The Uttar Pradesh chief minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari, was given the honour of moving the political resolution. A person who seemed to have rehabilitated himself on this day was Pranab Kumar Mukherjee. After a few months in oblivion, Mukherjee was appointed president of the West Bengal PCC(I) last month. By being asked to speak on the salient points of the economic resolution in the AICC session, Mukherjee returned to

centrestage. Another person who seemed to be heading for rehabilitation was the former Karnataka chief minister, R. Gundu Rao. His presence on the podium on the first day raised many eyebrows.

Rajiv Gandhi's presidential address was significant. The recent criticism of the government, that it was neglecting the public sector and deviating away from the path of socialism, was tactfully tackled by the Congress(I) president. He said that he did not believe in socialism which would make everyone equally poor. Reiterating that the objective of socialism, as set by Jawaharlal Nehru, was still the guiding principle, Rajiv Gandhi said, "We have to raise the standard of the poorest in the country. We have to see how to make the life of the most depressed people a little better. As Gandhiji said, we cannot be satisfied till we have wiped every tear from every eye." The young party president drove home his point by saying, "Our idea of socialism is that everyone must get richer." He replied to his critics, who have been complaining that the private sector was being boosted while the public sector was suffering, by saying that while the vital role of the public sector cannot be overlooked, the government had taken some steps to improve the industry, which should not be interpreted as 'pandering to the private sector'.

There was some confusion after the presidential address due to references made to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. He said, "We feel that they (Pakistan) are developing a nuclear weapon." This Rajiv Gandhi said, had compelled India to "look into various aspects of this question and to see what action we should take." This was interpreted by some as saying that India would review its nuclear policy of confining to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Later in the day, defence minister P. V. Narasimha Rao issued a clarification, which denied that the interpretation of the speech could be that India would reconsider its stand on nuclear weapons.

There was a change in the atmosphere of the session. It was more businesslike. On 6 December 1980, when Mrs Indira Gandhi had reached the dais, the chairman of the reception committee, H. K. L. Bhagat, had shouted on the microphone, "Ma a gayi (Mother has come)." Absence of sycophantic slogans in the 4 May session was a major departure from the past.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi



Rajiv Gandhi with other Congress(I) leaders at the AICC (I) session

GUJARAT

A State of Turmoil

No plans for state's silver jubilee celebrations

Founded in 1960, Gujarat rang in its silver jubilee year without any fanfare on 1 May this year. There were no official celebrations to mark the day as both the government and the people were dazed by the shock of the policemen's revolt on 22 April and the scars caused by the two-and-a-half month-long anti-reservation agitation that has by now assumed various dimensions throwing the entire state into a turmoil. To confuse the situation further, employees of the state government opened one more front by demanding the immediate publication of an official committee's report on the reservation-related roster system for promotion.

When a rally of the employees in Gandhinagar went to the Raj Bhavan to submit a memorandum demanding the publication of the Sadhwani Panel's report, things took a turn for the worse. The non-backward class employees have been complaining for some years that the roster system gave preferential treatment to the backward class employees in service.

The employees charged that 35 of their leaders, including women, were severely beaten up by the police while they were returning from the rally. As many as 23 had to be taken to hospital. The next day, on 30 April, the secretariat employees went on a lightning strike demanding action against the police officials responsible for beating up their leaders. The trouble came just as normalcy was returning to half-a-dozen cities including Ahmedabad. The government immediately opened negotiations with the union leaders of the secretariat employees but little progress was reported till the time of writing on 3 May. By this time, the ire of the statewide unions had already been roused and a call for mass casual leave on 3 May, followed up by a strike from 6 May, by some four lakh state employees was issued. On 2 May, former minister of state for finance and planning, Harihar Khambolja, who had gone to the Gandhinagar civil hospital to inquire into the health of the union leaders who had been beaten up was himself roughed up by some angry government employees.

The state government, which had originally consented to the setting up of a two-member panel by the Gujarat High Court to look into the

charges of police brutality in the Khadia-Raipur areas of the city, had second thoughts after the policemen's revolt on 22 April and moved the Supreme Court for a stay. The genesis of the press versus police confrontation lies in the 20 April order of the High Court setting up the panel. Policemen were angry that citizens had filed writ petitions against their officials in court using newspaper accounts of the alleged atrocities as the basis. The killing of the head constable, K. Laxman Desai, on 22 April took place in Raipur after the High Court appointed team had just completed its work in the

the Chief Justice observed: "When you (the state government) want to defuse the situation, the judges come in handy. But when it gets out of control, you hold the judges responsible. The Supreme Court cannot permit this."

On the political front, the Solanki government kept drawing sustenance from the repeated assertions of the central leaders that the chief minister would not be removed, nor would President's rule be imposed. There has been speculation about the fate of the ministry, especially because the Governor, B.K. Nehru, had been summoned back to Gandhinagar, cutting short his leave abroad. Solanki and his supporters were however, confident of riding out the storm. They kept emphasising their view that the anti-reservation stir had been kept alive with a political motive behind it.



Recently released pro-agitation student leaders

area.

The state government moved the Supreme Court towards the close of April against the 20 April order of the High Court, although it was a party to the order because it had even nominated a secretary, P.P. Rathod, as one of the two members of the panel. On 1 May, the Supreme Court bluntly told the state government that although courts normally did not interfere they had the jurisdiction in extreme situations to set up probes. At the time of filing this report, the state government's plea had still not been finally disposed of. But the observations of the Supreme Court when it first heard the plea were revealing enough. It said that a commission of inquiry must be appointed even if 50 per cent of the allegations of police atrocities in Ahmedabad were correct.

On the state government's move to challenge the High Court's order even after it had been a party to it,

The agitators who had suspended their stir in the wake of the police revolt announced that they would resume their activities with a rally on 1 May in Ahmedabad. Starting from the Gujarat College, the rally was to march to Hansol, on the outskirts of the city to gherao chief minister Solanki, at that time commissioning the Indira bridge linking Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad across the Sabarmati there. The plan was foiled by the police which arrested over 60 agitators.

In the last week of April, there were stray reports of caste clashes from some villages in Mehsana and Kaira district but by and large the people seemed to be getting tired of the prolonged disruption of daily life. But before this happened, Baroda and Surat saw fresh bouts of violence. The spectre of terror seen in Ahmedabad with the police revolt had subsided but there was palpable fear among the population. The col-

lapsed bridges of trust between the people and the police still remained to be reconstructed. The government, for its part, was trying to play down the revolt as much as it could. Nobody would even call the mass desertion on 22 April by the police an act of revolt. The police commissioner B.K. Jha chose to call it "excitement" in the wake of the murder of the head constable. The chief secretary, M. Sivagnanam would describe it as a "commotion." Ministers and officials still chose to parry questions

pertaining to disciplinary action.

The army, which was called out on 16 April, for the second time in the current agitation, was still patrolling the streets of Ahmedabad on 3 May. Major-General Afsir Karim, the general officer commanding, said that his men had used minimum force to quell the violent mobs. Still, as many citizens pointed out, the people seemed to respond to the presence of the jawans with warmth and trust. In the long run, agreed political pundits, this was not a good

omen. But it also showed the distance between the ordinary people of Ahmedabad and the civilian authorities. All this really seemed to put the reservation issue into the background. However, four unions of policemen came out with public appeals and reassurances that the police were friends of the people and were there for their safety and protection, indicating that the policemen themselves were aware of this aspect.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

MEDIA

Pressing Charges

Ahmedabad press accused of exaggerated reportage

It is no longer a question of the *Gujarat Samachar* alone, it is a question of the entire state. The system in Gujarat is collapsing under the brunt of the Solanki government's misdeeds," said Shreyans Shah, managing editor of the *Gujarat Samachar*. He was in New Delhi at the end of April trying to get his burnt press restarted and rally opinion against chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki. He met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and members of the press, but went back to Ahmedabad without many hopes. "A part of the press is itself against the press in Ahmedabad," he lamented. He was referring to the report submitted by a three-member team of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference (AINEC) on the current disturbances in Ahmedabad.

The members of the team Ramesh Gupta, editor of *Tej Weekly*. Vinod Mishra, editor of *Hindustan* and C.S. Pandit, chief of the New Delhi bureau of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*—had reiterated the official view of the Congress(I) that the Ahmedabad press was to blame for most of what had happened because it published "exaggerated and inflammatory" reports. "There is no denying that the role of the press in Gujarat has been consistently one of an adversary to the establishment. In the process, the media seems to have followed the dictum of "publish and be damned" irrespective of its impact on the general public sentiments. The team's overall impression was that the resentment against the *Gujarat Samachar* had built up over the last two years during which an open rift grew between the chief minister and the paper's owners who let loose a campaign of vilification against him," the report said. It went on to

allege that most of the riot-reporting of the press was "slanted" and that Ahmedabad newspapers—including *Gujarat Samachar*, the *Indian Express* and *Jansatta*—had "tampered" with photographs in order to "substantiate these slanted reports." The three pressmen only rephrased the statement of the union home minister, S.B. Chavan, in the Lok Sabha. The AINEC team also turned a blind eye on the role of the administration during the riots and instead chose to direct the press to evolve a code of conduct for itself "to function under such provocative and trying circumstances."

The report sent shock waves in the press circles of the capital—most thought the AINEC report itself was "slanted" and Shreyans Shah put it down as "politically motivated." His allegation was that the AINEC team had reached Ahmedabad predetermined to submit a report that would "suit the needs of Congress(I)."

According to his wife, Smritibehn who is also the managing director of *Gujarat Samachar*, the team mem-



Shantilal Shah, editor of *Gujarat Samachar*

bers gave an impression that they were not at all interested in looking at what the press in Ahmedabad had to say. "In fact, they did not even spend five minutes at the *Gujarat Samachar*...seeing the full extent of the damage there alone takes half an hour," said Smritibehn. Neither would the team hear of anything about the number of times the *Gujarat Samachar* had requested for police protection in the face of daily threats from "government agencies." According to the proprietors of the group, only a couple of days before the *Gujarat Samachar* building was burnt down, they had been warned that if they did not stop writing against the role of the police "they would suffer. We had sent a number of requests to the government and had all the relevant documents, but the AINEC team just refused to look at them saying they did not have time because they had to talk to so many other people," Smritibehn Shah said.

There are more allegations from the Shahs and other members of the Ahmedabad press. The AINEC investigating team, they maintain, was a guest of the Gujarat government and spent most of its time in the circuit house while in Ahmedabad. "Even their report, we know, was based on a draft prepared by Bhupat Vadodaria of the information department of the Gujarat government," alleged Shreyans Shah. He also pointed out that the owners of all three news organisations from which the AINEC team members came were Congress(I) Members of Parliament. Vishwabandhu Gupta, the owner of *Tej Weekly* is a Rajya Sabha member as is K.K. Birla of *Hindustan* and Tarun Kanti Ghosh of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is a Congress(I) member of the Lok Sabha. "Naturally," said Shah, "the Gupta family and the others have tried to curry favour with their political masters by bringing out such a biased report."

There is no disputing that some reports in the Gujarat press during

the anti-reservation agitation were exaggerated but that could not be said of all of them. There have been, in recent weeks, a number of cases of police highhandedness. What is more, the Solanki administration did not curb or condemn any of them.

The contention of the Ahmedabad press, however, is that this forms no ground for a physical assault on the press and newsmen. If the police thought the reports were exaggerated, the government could have

issued denials or contradictions or could have taken matters to court, say the newsmen. This they never did. The AINEC team observed correctly when it said that "the role of the press in Gujarat had been one of an adversary to the establishment" but it failed to pinpoint the reasons for such a state of tension between the government and the press. Relations had been strained only because the press had at every opportunity exposed what the Solanki govern-

ment wanted to hide, the latest instances being the uncovering of the Mrugesh Jaikrishna affair and the atrocities of the Gujarat police in various parts of the state." "Does the AINEC want to say," asked one senior newsmen in Delhi, "that the press should always dance hand in hand with the establishment if it wants to keep itself safe from physical attacks? Is that the role of the press?"

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

ANTULAY TRIAL

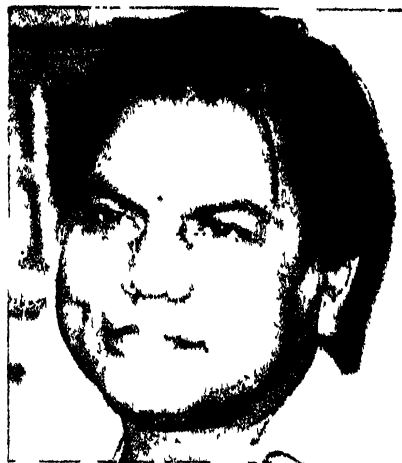
Back in the Dock

Former chief minister Antulay's trial to be resumed

The former chief minister A.R. Antulay will be tried for 21 of the 43 charges made against him by Ramdas Nayak of the BJP. Nayak who had filed a criminal complaint against Antulay on 9 September 1981, for cheating, extortion and illegal gratification accused him of collecting Rs three crores from cooperative sugar factories (Rs 2,63,89,898), distilleries (Rs 1,39,500), builders (Rs 6,50,000), cooperative banks (Rs 10,00,000) and Rs 17,54,550 from others.

The special judge Dinshaw Mehta who began dictating his order on 23 April, seven months after he started hearing arguments from both sides and the evidence of nearly 57 witnesses, dismissed the charges relating to cheating and extortion, the permission given to the National Centre For Performing Arts for a hotel, the no objection certificate to a firm of jewellers and conspiracy. The conspiracy charge was inherent in the case according to prosecution counsel Mahesh Jethmalani. He said, "We only brought it out Mr Antulay was not in charge of the cooperative department, so he had no direct access to the sugar cooperatives. He had to use Mr Narendra Tidke, the then minister for labour who, when he sent round the circular to get the money, was overnight made the minister for cooperatives. Similarly, Mr Ajit Kerkar was a trustee of the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan and he even acted on behalf of the NCPA. The then chief secretary Mr P.G. Gavai was also both trustee of the IGPP and ex-officio member of the NCPA."

However, the counsel for the defence, Niteen Pradhan, said that the conspiracy charge had fallen through and if the accusation that Antulay did it for self-aggrandisement fell through then little would remain.



A.R. Antulay

It is obvious that Antulay collected the money for charitable purposes. There was no sufficient evidence to frame the charges of conspiracy. When the courts reopen on 10 June, Antulay who is expected to be back in Bombay from London where he has been convalescing after four heart bypass surgeries, will be tried on charges of bribery and corruption in connection with the distribution of cement and industrial alcohol on a *quid pro quo* basis. It may be recalled that Justice Lentin of the Bombay High Court, had in his judgment on 12 January 1982 upheld the charges against Antulay. He said "The *quid pro quo* between allotments by Antulay in favour of certain builders and donations made by them directly or indirectly is established." It was on this day that Antulay had to resign from his chief ministership.

During the arguments before Justice Mehta, two builders, Ramchand Ludhani of Evershine Builders and Deepak Raheja of Rajeha Builders were heard and they admitted to making donations of Rs four lakhs

and Rs 5.60 lakhs, respectively to the Konkan Unnati Mitra Mandal. In return, they got 500 and 700 metric tonnes of cement, respectively. Both said they made the donation through Pesi Tata who has since died. In the case relating to industrial alcohol, Anil Kumar Ruia of Kolhapur Sugar Mills Ltd., and United Agencies Ltd., admitted that a donation of Rs 4.25 lakhs was made by three of his firms to the Konkan Unnati Mitra Mandal as *quid pro quo* for the restoration of a 20 per cent cut in the allotment of industrial alcohol to the Kolhapur Sugar Mills. He also made this donation through the late Mr Pesi Tata.

The charge of cheating and extortion of donations from the sugar factories, was dismissed because the judge disbelieved the deposition of the prosecution's star witness Shalini Patil, wife of the chief minister who claimed that she had been cheated by Antulay. He also disbelieved the evidence of her brother Uttamrao Phalke of the Sangli Karkhana. About Shalini Patil, Justice Mehta said "It must be stated that Mrs Patil is not an ordinary woman or housewife. She was a lawyer by training and a politician. It could be safe to presume that she is a shrewd politician since she was in the number two position in the accused's government."

Perhaps Ramakant Ovalekar the suave, gentle senior counsel for Antulay should have the last word on the issue. When Justice Mehta dictated his order, Ovalekar said: "Mr Jethmalani overstated his case when he dramatically proclaimed before the court that only a miracle can save the accused. You have the proof of his folly today. You see now that the miracle has started happening. He was unjustifiably certain of the assumed soundness of his case. What he thought was a bird of paradise has turned out to be a parrot after all. The sugar lobby led by Shalini Patil has been shown its right place. There is nothing more mortifying, than to be disbelieved as a witness in the court of law."

Olga Tella, Bombay

BOMBAY CIVIC POLLS

Thackeray-Vasantdada Nexus

Congress-(I) for alliance with Shiv Sena

The Congress(I) suffered serious reverses throughout the state, especially in Bombay in the recently-concluded elections to the state's municipal corporations and councils. The Congress(I) lost in 21 of the 48 councils in Marathwada, Tasgaon, Islampur and Ashta in Sangli Nasik and Pune in Western Maharashtra. In Vidarbha the party lost in Nagpur, Amravati, and Akola and in the Konkan as well.

In Daryapur in Vidarbha, where the Congress(S) secured a majority, the Congress(I) got only four out of 25 seats while in Dhamangaon where

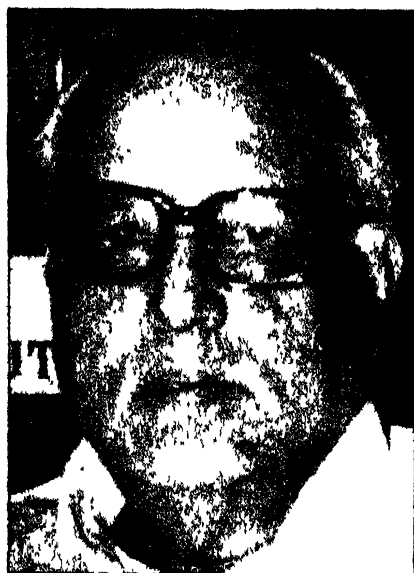
also played their part. As Nilkant Khadilkar, editor of *Navakal* said, "The Shiv Sena won because it returned to its original position of Marathi Asmita." One political observer said, "The Shiv Sena really worked for its victory. When they found around 3 pm that there was very low voting they made lists of people who had not voted and went to their homes to bring them out to vote. It was in fact, the victory of the Shiv Sena cadre."

The Maharashtrians appeared to be worried about rumours and trends that pointed to a long-term plan to make Bombay a union territory. There were several indications: like non-inclusion of a Marathi-speaking minister in the cabinet even though his name was suggested; a larger share of tickets to non-Maharashtrians which was justified by Murli Deora as Maharashtrians formed only 32 per cent of the population but got 36 per cent of the tickets and the government having to run to Delhi for everything concerning Bombay. Even the final list of candidates for the Assembly elections was decided from Delhi. Said Pramod Navalkar of the Shiv Sena, "In the olden days, the minorities from UP, Kerala and Gujarat used to beg to be included in the cabinet, but today it is the Maharashtrians who are begging to be included in a cabinet in the state."

While it would be too simplistic to interpret the victory as a vote against the Congress(I), coming so soon after the spectacular victory in the Lok Sabha elections and the victory in the Assembly elections in Bombay, the point is that it will take all the political statesmanship of Rajiv Gandhi to handle the fallout created by the feud between the chief minister and Deora. According to reports, the chief minister has already made overtures to the Shiv Sena saying that they would like to cooperate with them on the various committees of the corporation. While neither the rank and file of the Shiv Sena or the Congress(I) are for an alliance, the CM will need Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena at this moment to keep Delhi at bay. There is already a move on the part of some MPs and others to ask the high command to remove the CM following the debacle at the corporation and council elections.

With Shiv Sena backing, any

attempts by the high command to oust Dada would be interpreted as a move against the Marathi people. One of the Shiv Sena's demands is the scrapping of the BRCC(I). It is an anomaly and has always been one in Bombay. Whereas states like West Bengal have just one PCC(I) namely, the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, Maharashtra has always had the MPCC(I) and the BRCC(I). In the 170-member Bombay municipal corporation, the Shiv Sena has 74 members, the Congress(I) 37, the BJP 13, the Janata Party 10, the Congress(S) nine, and others including independents 26. Of these 110 are Marathi-speaking, with 72 of them from the Shiv Sena, 12 from the Congress(I), four from the BJP and six from the Janata. Interestingly, of the 43 candidates with alleged police records as published in a weekly, 11



CM Vasantdada Patil

the BJP got a majority of the seats, the Congress(I) could get only five of the 21 seats. The one common feature of the election results was that almost throughout the state the local bosses of the Congress(I) were overthrown. In Amravati, the votes were cast against the MP Mrs Usha Chaudhari, in Nagpur against Rikabchand Sharma whose son was among those defeated, and in Bombay it was against Murli Deora. Congress(I) rebels fought from almost all constituencies against the official candidates. In Bombay, discontent over the selection of candidates led to over 80 rebels entering the fray.

In Bombay, other factors like the chief minister, Vasantdada Patil's feud with the Bombay Regional Congress Committee(I) chief and wrong selection of candidates by Deora.



Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray

of them from the Congress(I) have won. Among the others was one from Shiv Sena, Khimbahadur T. Thapa who is wanted under the National Security Act.

Among the many interesting facts that emerged from these elections is that Sharad Pawar has no place among the Marathi-speaking people of this city and was unable to channelise the fears of the Marathi people in his direction. Pawar was among the first to offer his party's cooperation to the Janata and BJP who have over-inflated notions of their strength and were humbled at the polls. In the corporation that was superseded last year, the Congress(I) held 35 seats, the Shiv Sena, 20, and the Congress(S) nine.

Olga Tella, Bombay

MAHARASHTRA

Is the CM's Son Above the Law?

Vasantdada Patil's son accused of violating FSI rules

A Western Railway motorman, Basil Shamrao Rath, has filed a petition in the Bombay High Court raising a number of questions. They are: whether those persons who are related or have influence upon the cabinet ministers including the chief minister should be able to construct buildings in violation of regulations in force? And, whether the municipal corporation and the state government and other concerned authorities are not bound to take action to remove or demolish the constructions carried out in violation of the regulations?

The person against whom the petition is filed is Chandrakant Patil (28), the stepson of the Maharashtra CM Vasantdada Patil. The Rathes have had the misfortune of clashing with Chandrakant Patil who owns a flat in Rath Mansion and has made several unauthorised alterations that amount to using extra floor space index (FSI) of over 800 sq. metres belonging to the Rath family's property. The Rathes have been in Dadar, in Bombay since the 12th century, a fact they are proud of. Dadar in the language of the fishermen (the original inhabitants of the island which was one of seven that made up Bombay), means "ladder" as it connected Parel and Mahim. The Rathes are originally from Daultabad near Aurangabad, their ancestors having fled after the battle between Allaudin Khilji and Raja Ramdeo Yadav in 1294.

In 1980, the Rath brothers sold a flat in their building to Chandrakant Patil for Rs 1,23,000 and a car parking space along with the permission to construct a garage at his own cost. Since Patil wanted to purchase the stilt area on the ground floor below his flat, the Rath brothers agreed to sell it to him for an additional payment of Rs 48,000 with permission to enclose the stilt area. It was agreed that if it meant extra FSI, then Patil's associate Nirbhay Singh would get the extra FSI sanctioned so that the brothers would not be deprived of their FSI. Nirbhay Singh, however, failed to get the extra FSI sanctioned and the agreement was cancelled and another, which said that Patil would pay up when his plans were sanctioned, was made. Patil then submitted a plan to the municipal corporation which gave it an Intimation of Disapproval (IOD). The IOD said that the stilt area could be used

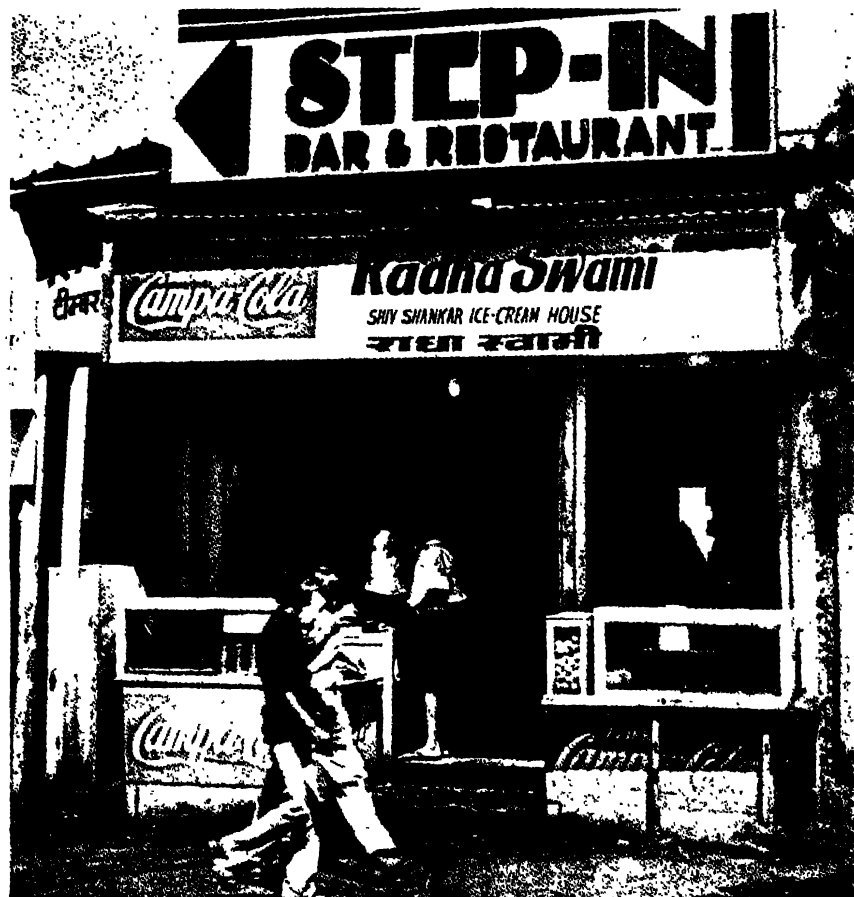
only for parking space and a compound wall had to be constructed along the road. On the basis of this, Chandrakant Patil began constructing the garage and also started enclosing the stilt area so that it could be used for commercial or residential accommodation, which would mean a loss of FSI for the Rath brothers. When they objected, Patil wrote to them saying that he had got the sanction of the municipal corporation. Rath then wrote to the corporation on 7 August 1984 and to the officer 'G' North Ward to demolish the unauthorised construction. Around that time—May 1984—the Bombay municipal corporation was superseded and Mr D.M. Sukhtankar was replaced by an administrator, J. Kanga, and an additional commissioner, Mr Soman, who were reluctant to confront the chief minister.

It is reliably learnt that they got hold of all the papers relating to Chandrakant Patil and did not let the

'G' North Ward officer, Mr Khairnar go ahead with the demolitions. Rath wrote repeatedly to the corporation but did not get any replies. Meanwhile, Patil converted the stilt area into a wall-panelled room with big glass doors and an air-conditioner.

The portion above the garage was made into a room and the wall of the balcony broken down to gain access to it. Patil also had a wall built to divide the plot into two to make a private garden for himself. In all his constructions, Chandrakant Patil allegedly used up 800 sq. ft. Rath alleged that Patil had "encroached on the rights of the petitioner with the tacit or active collusion of the officer agents and or servants of the municipal corporation in total violation of law and regulation in force."

Meanwhile, Patil got himself elected as chairman of the Rath Mansion Cooperative Society and filed a criminal suit for alleged defalcation against Basil Rath in the Bandra court which is pending. Rath was granted bail and it is believed that Patil is now trying to get the bail cancelled. Patil also used his influence with the deputy registrar of the cooperative society to seize all the



The Step-In restaurant owned by Chandrakant Patil

society's documents from Rath and told the corporation that he was using the enclosed space for the society's office. This has been disputed by Rath who says that the enclosure took place in 1983, and regularisation was obtained only in February 1985.

Meanwhile, in September 1984 Chandrakant Patil got Basil Rath, a Western Railway employee, transferred to Central Railway; something which is illegal. Rath had been injured in an accident and had been unable to report for duty till the end of March this year. He told SUNDAY that after the Railwaymen's union and the newspapers took up the issue, the Railway Board, on 29 March this year cancelled the unlawful order. Instructions have been issued to the divisional officer who has kept Rath in the dark about it.

Till 22 April, Rath has not been informed about the cancellation orders. Rath, who has served in the railways for 20 years, is surprised that though the Prime Minister has issued orders that there should be no political interference in transfers, the chief minister of Maharashtra's son can meddle with a senior employee's career.

Patil has also committed a number of other irregularities in connection with his restaurant, 'Step-In.' He claims that the minister of state for urban development has regularised this unauthorised structure. The municipal officer G.K. Khairnar has been stopped from demolishing the illegal shed despite the demolition notice date having expired long ago. The top brass of the Bombay municipal corporation, it is said, do not want to antagonise the chief minis-

ter. Step-In is on the ground floor of the Green Lawn Cooperative Housing Society. He had ostensibly purchased three *galas* from Rizvi Builders who own the building and converted the area, a total of 350 sq ft into the restaurant. One does not know whether he paid the builder the official price of Rs 1,000 per sq ft. On 17 May 1984, Chandrakant Patil had applied for permission to erect a temporary shed for the monsoon. Permission was granted on 21 May 1984 with the stipulation that it would be removed completely by 31 October.

On 16 October 1984 Patil requested that he should be allowed to continue to make the shed a temporary one but the officer of the urban development department said that this request could not be maintained and that he should apply to the corporation every year for renewal. On 22 November, Patil forfeited the deposit and the security charges.

On 26 December, 1984, the corporation sent Patil a notice saying they would remove the shed. The residents of Greenlawn Cooperative Housing Society also complained to the corporation on 27 April 1984 that Chandrakant Patil had excavated the foundation and broken the RCC beam in order to install a cement water tank. On 28 January 1985, the 'C' north ward office took out a notice under Section 351 of the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act for unauthorised structures and it was served on Patil on 20 February 1985. However, on 1 February 1985, Patil wrote to the minister for urban development through his manager N.R. Jadhav to say the shed should be made permanent for ten years instead of only four months during the monsoon. He claimed that foreigners dropped into his hotel on their way to the airport and since their restaurant was on the ground floor, rubbish thrown by residents from the upper balconies fell on customers.

On 20 February 1985, after receiving the notice, Patil wrote to the municipal administrator saying that he had submitted proposals to the government and so no action should be taken. This was a bluff on his part because the records clearly show that on 14 February, Mantralaya had already informed him that his request for ten years could not be granted. And in the third week of April, Patil boasted that the minister for urban development, Ram Manohar Tripathi, had personally regularised the unauthorised structure. On what basis Tripathi could have done this, remains a mystery.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

AIR INDIA

Corruption in High Places

Much ado about nothing, was the outcome of the emergency board meeting of Air India held on 17 April. The chairman of the airline, Capt. A.M. Kapoor, presented a lengthy report regarding the malpractices prevailing in the functioning of the General Sales Agency (GSA) in London and the alleged collusion between the commercial department and the GSA. The managing director, Capt. D. Bose, defending the actions said that certain trade norms had been followed in the functioning of the GSA and the London office to compete with the other international carriers. However, Capt. Bose was at a loss to explain why S.S. Kaul of the London office was allowed to retire before the enquiry into the grant of the extra ten per cent commission to GSA over the normal incentives and commission.

It is now known that S.S. Kaul had filed his voluntary retirement papers sometime in the beginning of the year and the managing director had instructed the director (commercial), to see that Kaul was not allowed to retire before the investigations into certain aspects of the functioning of the London office and GSA were completed. The commercial department, it appears, did not carry out the instructions for quite some time and ultimately informed the managing director on 15 March that there was no possibility of stopping the voluntary retirement as 15 March was

the last working day of his notice period. Kaul retired and Air India now cannot take any action against him.

Before the emergency board meeting, the GSA's representatives from London arrived in India armed with a plethora of allegations of corruption against the part-time chairman. Through the Delhi office of an advertising agency, a press note making a number of allegations and the agenda for discussion at the emergency meeting was circulated to newspaper offices. The board decided to streamline the functioning of the GSA at London and has asked Air India to seek more guarantees from the operator and directed the commercial department to keep a strict vigil on the working of the London-based Indian business house now looking after the GSA. The chairman Capt. Kapoor is actually surprised by the problem. "I cannot understand how an airline can make losses on a route where there is a waiting list for 15 days. Every flight which is operated from London and New York is packed to capacity. Even then, we are showing losses. Who is pocketing the profits? Is Air India flying this route for itself or for the GSA operator in London?" a senior airlines manager is said to have commented at a social gathering recently.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

NEW DELHI

Change of Station

The Begum of Oudh to shift into a 600-year old palace

The reign of the Begum of Oudh at the New Delhi railway station is coming to an end. After living in shabby splendour in the portico of the station for 10 years, Begum Shahzadi Vilavat Mahal has been asked to move out of the ceremonial platform which she has been forcibly occupying since 1975. On 12 April, the railway minister, Bansi Lal, told the Lok Sabha that the railway authorities would be taking 'necessary action' against the Begum and her family. Now the Begum, her son, Shahzada Ali Raza Mahal, daughter Shahzadi Sakina Mahal, the large retinue of servants and a pack of Dobermann Pinscher dogs are to shift to Malcha Mahal, a 600 year old monument on Southern Ridge Road.

'We would have been happy if the government had given back our ancestral property in Lucknow,' roared Ali Raza Mahal when approached by SUNDAY for his opinion on the new home allotted to them. 'We have exhausted our finances and have sold our family heirlooms and jewels. We are at the point of starvation. The government has already proved wrong at Lucknow. We will only shift to Malcha Mahal if we are given a comfortable monthly allowance,' declared the Begum's son. He was flanked by a number of snarling dogtied to lamp posts. Inside, in the covered portico, the Begum sat surrounded by her memorabilia wearing mournful black. As always she keeps before her a bowl of poison. It is a constant reminder of the injustice faced by them over the past decade.

The Begum has been staying at the railway station since 1975 in protest against the authorities who allegedly 'usurped her property'. She is the great grand daughter of the last Nawab of Oudh and his seventh wife who fled to Nepal after the uprising in 1857. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru offered the family a small palace in Srinagar after 1947. In 1971, a devastating fire in Lucknow destroyed most of the family's priceless possessions. The Begum blamed the government for the fire and demanded her ancestral property back especially an old palace in Lucknow which is now being used by a pharmaceutical company. In 1975, the Begum, claiming to be the sole heir and owner of seven palaces in Lucknow moved with her retinue to the

New Delhi railway station and has been there ever since.

The family remained in their makeshift home in spite of protests from helpless railway officials. Whenever the ceremonial platform was required, she would move out to the garden. Last year, when former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had visited the station, she gave orders to the Delhi administration officials to

including the fort of Tughlakhabad and the Lal Mahal, near Chanakya apuri were found suitable. The Begum herself visited five houses and preferred Malcha Mahal. The Begum's acceptance was conveyed to the home ministry last year. In a letter to the divisional railway manager dated 6 December, 1984, a home ministry official wrote "The home minister feels that we may agree to the building known as Malcha Mahal being given to her after repair. He has suggested that the work may be started."

The monument presently in a state of neglect and disuse is likely to be extensively renovated before the Begum and her family can move in.



The Begum of Oudh with her dogs at the railway station

find her an alternate accommodation.

In 1976, the government offered the Begum a modern bungalow in Lucknow which she rejected as 'meaningless'. The Begum and her children visited Lucknow to inspect the bungalow, and called the offer a 'humiliation for the house of Oudh'. Said Ali Raza, 'Can you imagine the Begum staying in a government bungalow? The house was not even fit for our dogs. My mother said she would rather die at the dirty railway station, than accept the menial offer of the bungalow.'

The Delhi administration on orders from the home ministry then began a hunt for a suitable residence for the royal family. Dozens of houses and monuments were located and five

Though the Delhi administration has approached the Archaeological Survey of India for permission to give the palace to the Begum, no date for the eviction of the family has been fixed. According to Ali Raza they will offer to undertake the renovations themselves if funds are given to them by the government. 'We will erect a large gate outside the mahal. We want no contact with the outside world once we get the mahal.' The Begum of Oudh and her retinue are shortly to be shifted from their royal abode at the railway station into a palace reminiscent of another bygone era. Instead of trains and railway officials they will now live with peacocks and jackals.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

NARCOTICS

The Mountain Paradise

Drug-peddlers operate on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border



A smugglers' hideout in the nearby village of Rosapukandam

Kumuli, a small town, in the West Keri Ghats on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border has found a place on the international tourist map. For many foreign drug trippers it is a paradise and an important stop in their itinerary. The reason: cheaply available *ganja* and opium which is grown on the mountain slopes.

A kilogram of *ganja* is available for around Rs 100. The same stuff will fetch ten times the amount in any Indian city. Being a border town sheltered on every side by thick forests, Kumuli is ideal for the cultivation of drugs and smuggling. Since the land under *ganja* cultivation falls in both states, the excise men are not sure about the question of jurisdiction: which state does the particular area under cultivation fall in? Almost no action is taken against the big farmers who grow *ganja*. The excise department often "raids" the fields once in two or three months, but according to reports that only small and medium farmers are attacked and just a small part of the crop is destroyed.

Kumuli has thus become an important point on the international drug trail which stretches from Afghanistan through Kathmandu, Goa and South East Asia. Many of the tourists however come to see the wild life sanctuary at Thekkady. They are met by agents who tell them about the cheap *ganja*. For many tourists it is something too tempting to resist, considering how much such endless trips would cost in the West.

From Kumuli town one has to

travel in a jeep and trudge through dangerous mountain paths to reach places like Thankamani village and Double Cutting. The farmers are only too willing to rent out a part of their huts and serve *ganja* for only Rs two or three a day. For many the search for paradise ends here. The farmers and the local populace are very protective about their plantations. Once when the PWD engineers went to a place near Double Cutting for the initial survey for a road, the farmers drove them away. Roads would mean

a loss of privacy and wealth.

The enterprising hoteliers of Kumuli town have of late discovered a unique way of introducing unsuspecting foreigners to drugs. They are served black tea with a drop of refined sap of the plant (It is the sap that is converted into *charas*). The intoxicating effect of the special black tea forces most of them to ask for more. Then comes the tale. And the trip deep into the forest follows.

The mountains are also infested with poachers and timber smugglers. Most of the smuggling of timber is done by hill tribes known as Kallathevars who are paid up to Rs 50 a day by merchants in Tamil Nadu for carrying wood stolen from the forest to a particular spot. Said K. C. Jacob, a reporter of the *Deepika* daily, who has been carrying on a one-man crusade against deforestation and corruption: "Most of the wood is carried through the backyard of some forest range offices. The Tamil Nadu forest officials even encourage the smuggling of rare and costly wood from Kerala." The mountains around Thekkady wildlife sanctuary look bald and wild animals are seldom seen. After a two and a half hour boat ride around the sanctuary, this correspondent saw only a herd of ten elephants.

The mountain paradise however faces no immediate threat from the excise men. The local population is happy with the money that the poppy boom has brought. The prosperity is evident from the new hotels and concrete structures jarring the mountain landscape.

Bino John, Kumuli

NEW DELHI

Asiad Hostel to Become Hotel

The only way to save it from further disuse, say officials

The spirit of the Asian Games seems to have died after the sporting extravaganza ended in 1982. While the stadia constructed for the games are lying in a state of neglect and misuse, other projects have not been completed even three years after the games. One of the mandatory requirements for hosting the games was to have a large players' hostel situated close to the main sports complex. The hostel to be called the Vence Hotel located close to the Indraprastha Indoor Stadium is still unfinished. The complex covering an area of 4.5 acres has already cost the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) Rs 16 crores and is now on the verge of being converted

into a commercial hotel.

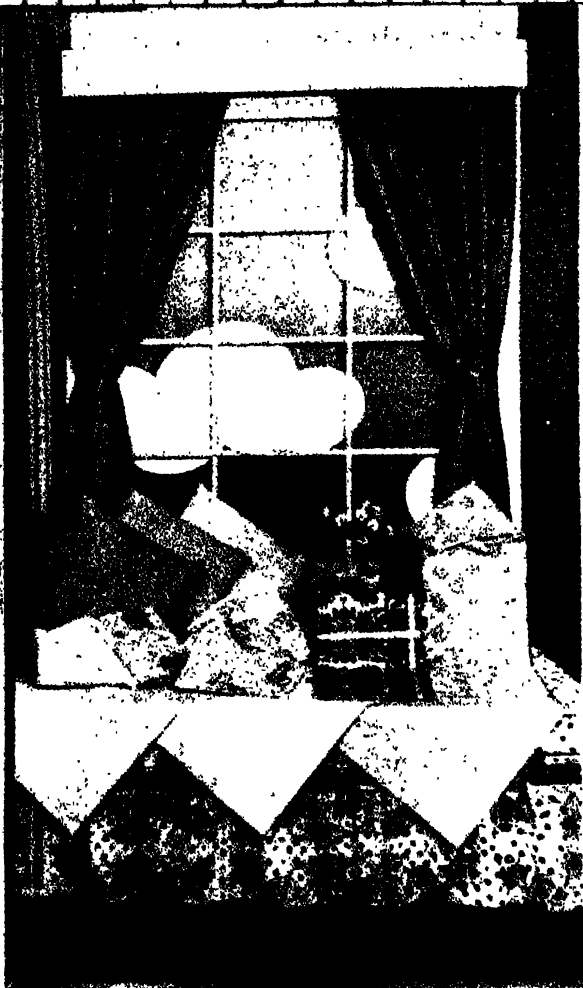
The utility of the players' hostel after the conclusion of the games was discussed at the highest level before the games began. It was decided that the multi-storied hostel would have a players' block, practice halls, a physiotherapy centre and a gymnasium. The hostel would be available to tourists. Only a part of the structure was however completed before the games began and minimal use was made of the practice halls and recreation centres. Once the games were over, all construction activity at the complex stopped. In fact even the walls of the hostel, left unplastered in 1982, have not yet been completed.

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In 1983 the DDA decided to hand over the complex to an 'appropriate agency' for maintenance. Tenders were invited from hoteliers interested in the commercial use of the complex. In view of the recession in the hotel industry and the glut of hotel accommodation in the months following the Asiad there were very few takers. The Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) which had earlier expressed interest in the project withdrew its offer. The DDA faced strong criticism from the ministry of works and housing for turning a sports hostel to a commercial hotel. Now, according to DDA officials, they have been able to convince the government that setting up a hotel is the only way to save the players' hostel from further disuse.

The DDA is now finalising negotiations with hoteliers who responded to their second tender application issued a few months ago. Though the response was far from overwhelming, some hotel chains including one from Bangalore approached the DDA for taking over the complex. Leading the bidders are the Indian Hotels Company who are in all probability likely to be given the licence to run the complex. The Indian Hotels have, however, raised several objections to the design and standard of construction of the 338 room building. Rights for boating in the large lake adjoining the Indraprastha Stadium will also be given to the company if granted the licence.

According to R A Khemani, chief engineer, DDA, the construction of

the players' hostel ran into heavy weather from the very beginning. Now the DDA is ensuring that the contract they enter into will ensure that some portion of the hotel will be made available to them if any major sporting event is organised in the capital. The proposal to have in the complex practice halls and centres for recreation will, however, have to be done away with as it will defeat the purpose for which the complex is being constructed. Meanwhile, the Indraprastha Indoor Stadium, being maintained till now by the DDA, is to be handed over to the Sports Authority of India. The DDA is demanding Rs 40 crores as cost incurred by it for the stadium's construction.

Ritu Sarm, New Delhi

ANDHRA PRADESH

Preserving the Past

Measures to prevent demolition of old monuments suggested

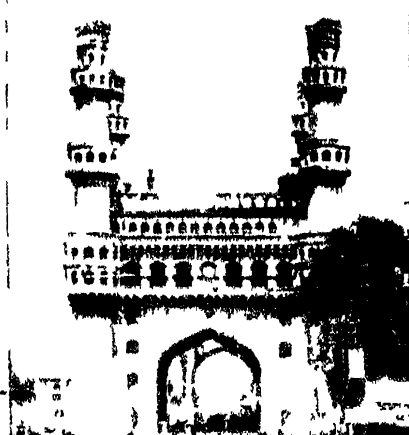
The astronomical valuation of land value in Hyderabad in the past few decades is far from integrating the historic fabric of the city. While some legislation protecting ancient monuments of historic interest exist under the Archaeological Act, it is not sufficient for the protection of buildings which are still in use. Recently a pilot study on their conservation and protection, the first comprehensive study conducted for an Indian city sponsored by the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (HUDA) and the Ford Foundation highlighted many of the problems. The study report suggested many administrative measures, tax exemptions and other legal methods requiring the concerted effort of public agencies, voluntary organisations and the building owners to preserve the special identity of the city. A workshop attended by architects, town planners and experts in environmental engineering conducted in Hyderabad recently discussed the study report and recommended that an action plan be prepared by HUDA within six months for conserving city monuments. The workshop stressed that the implementation could be possible only if public awareness was built up.

In 1983, only public awareness and the series of articles by a city daily saved the outer walls of the Golconda fort from being demolished. In fact, the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (HUDA) is now advertising plots for sale in the area between the inner and outer walls of

the fort since only the inner fortress came under the purview of the Archaeological Act and the outer wall had disintegrated in many places. Unauthorised constructions within the fort walls were stopped as a result of strong public opinion. But while there may be awareness for preserving well known city landmarks such as the Charminar and Qutb Shahi tombs, this awareness and pride in the city's architectural heritage has to be extended to cover the large number of privately owned buildings reflecting the regional and local styles of architecture which give the city its unique character.

The detailed study identified ten distinguishable architectural styles in Hyderabad city and listed 165 buildings representing all the styles and periods. Three special areas were categorised for preservation: conservation areas that are in the

The Charminar protected monument



immediate surroundings of protected monuments; design zones which are new areas requiring design control and neighbourhood improvement areas which require specific improvement of buildings, facades and services as in old style bazars. In Hyderabad city, the interesting old buildings are not confined only to the old city. The older parts of the new city to the north of the River Musi, also contain buildings in the regional and vernacular styles almost 100 years old. The city has grown to encompass the old summer palaces and *baghs* of the nobility. The twin city of Secunderabad with its bazars, churches and bungalows gives an interesting mix of European styles using both Islamic and Hindu architectural features resembling Palladian villas, manor houses and Romanesque churches. The 165 buildings listed by the study are spread out all over the city and only ten per cent of them are unoccupied.

The study suggested an amendment to the Andhra Pradesh Urban Areas (Development) Act 1975 to make it necessary for owners to take permission before demolishing or altering a listed building as well as empower the HUDA to relax land use regulations so that a listed building can be used in a more remunerative manner. Exemption from gift tax, wealth tax and property tax on listed buildings would help to create a situation where the owners would conserve their own buildings with a possible reuse plan, it said. A novel suggestion which would go a long way in preserving the historic monuments may be the notification of the areas as "free trade zones" by granting total or partial exemption of sales tax and entertainment tax in

V. N. Singh, Hyderabad

A Helping Hand

Guidance for the childless

Family Planning (FP) programmes should also tackle the problem of infertility and offer guidance to the childless. This is the gist of a policy statement on infertility released by the medical advisory panel of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) after deliberations during 1984. The IPPF statement should stimulate some hard thinking among FP policy makers in Third World countries where high pressure FP has become synonymous with drastic population control measures.

The IPPF has said that family planning associations (FPA) "have a responsibility to educate clients with regard to the prevention of infertility and to be responsive to their questions on this difficult and sensitive problem." Many conditions which cause infertility are 'preventable' and FPAs should be aware of the prevalence and major causes of infertility in the areas where they work. Among the preventable causes are sexually transmitted diseases (STD) infections following childbirth or abortion.

To fulfil the role of preventing the preventable IPPF has called for programmes to control STD, better obstetric care at primary health care level including adequate training of traditional birth attendants like *dais*, better access to effective contraception to reduce incidence of illegal abortion as well as humane treatment of victims of botched up abortions, availability of contraceptive information and services to adolescents, programmes to control diseases like tuberculosis. The IPPF is expectedly cautious and non-committal in its reference to possible infertility caused by pelvic infections among IUD users and delayed return to fertility among those who have used the injectable contraceptive.

In principle, the policy stand on infertility ought to require FP personnel to give full information to potential acceptors of IUD and injectables on the possibility of impaired fertility, so as to ensure an informed choice. However, considering the way target incentive oriented FP policy is implemented in this country, such sympathetic counselling seems an unrealistic possibility.

Vimal Balasubrahmanyam, Secunderabad



The Dal Lake: polluted

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

A Lake in Peril

Slow implementation of anti-pollution measures

The Dal Lake, in Kashmir, is now threatened with pollution and heavy silting. Alarmed that a major tourist attraction is in danger, the government of Kashmir has decided to develop it in a phased manner but lack of funds, slow implementation of the plans by the authorities and encroachments by the people living around the lake, are also responsible for the problems.

The lake, situated in the east of Srinagar city, is continuously being encroached upon. Over one thousand houses and hotels guilty of such encroachments had been identified a couple of years ago but nothing has been done about them. Another source of pollution is the sewage from the hotels on the Boulevard overlooking the Gagribal area of the lake. There are about 50 hotels in the area and only a few have proper sewage disposal systems and water from the Telbul nullah and the bare hill slopes and drains which flow into the lake has caused silting. The growth of weeds have also polluted the lake's water and raised the lake bed at different points.

A team of experts from New Zealand studied the problem four years ago. After conducting thorough investigations, they recommended measures to check the pollution of the lake and repair the damage caused to it. The state government accepted their recommendations and long term plan, to be implemented in two phases, was drawn up. The suggestions by the experts were construction of a Mall road on the northern and western sides of the lake to preserve it from being encroached upon, suitable placement of houseboats, sewer

age facilities to prevent sewage water into the lake, construction of a control gate on the Anchar nullah, more openings in the bunds of the lake, the construction of a settling basin at the Telbul nullah, plan to demolish the hotels on the Dachigam and construction of a Telbul nullah underpass near the shallow bay.

The estimated cost of the scheme is more than Rs 70 crore. The project began in 1978. The first phase, estimated to cost Rs 50 crore, includes the construction of a 1.7 kilometre long road. The plans also include construction of foreshore roads, parking structures, relocation of hotels and the construction of a settling basin at Telbul. The project has incurred during the past few years, however, has been slow.

The scheme is of vital importance for the tourist trade and the environmental balance in the area. Due to the shortage of funds, the project even its first phase is not yet complete in time.

ment through the help from international agencies including the UNICEF. Meanwhile, the Dal Lake continues to face grave and serious problems with the total area of 24 sq miles of the lake has shrunk considerably (it was only 16.7 sq kilometres in 1980 and of which clear water area was only 11.7 sq kilometres). The lake and also the famous Jhelum river in the city are polluted because of the lack of proper drainage and sewerage system and epidemic and rampant. The Srinagar municipal authorities have yet to take any action.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

The Saddest Chapter

The Raj has not snapped its ties with independent India; they are just more elastic. In the world of publishing according to Geeti Sen, the art historian, the hold of scholars abroad over matters Indian is still considerable. Sen, ever since she set eyes on the *Akbarnamah* in the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1972, wanted to do a book on it. Phillip Wilson, the publishers of Sotheby's were keen she write it and even professed an advance. The manuscript reached them in 1980. Meanwhile, Sen was told that Wilson had overlooked a fact: the plans of Her Majesty's Stationary Office to publish the *Akbarnamah*. The task was entrusted to R. Skeleton, the keeper of the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert museum who had been a



Geeti Sen

sort of guide to Sen. And it was through him that *Akbarnamah* finally saw the light of day. The book was published in India ultimately. However, Sen's unhappy tryst with the Raj was not over. Her book on the National Museum, commissioned by Wilson, was also taken into a *cul-de-sac* by the same publishers.

Designs on India

The Indian male has finally made it. To bring high-tech to India is easier than bringing in *haute couture*. Christian Dior's Monsieur range of men's readymade garments is a step in the right direction; the Indian male is at last beginning to believe in fashionable clothes. Geoffroy de

Seynes from Dior was scouring the Indian markets recently to find out how French clothes could be adapted to suit India.

Delhi and Bombay will soon see French designs on India. For the Nehru jacket we gave them, will they respond with *khadi* tuxedos?

Politics Doctored

It is simply a case of doctoring politics. Shyam Sunder Mohapatra, the former general secretary of the All India Congress Committee and member of the Rajya Sabha, was expelled from the Congress last November for "indiscipline." The politician then decided to become a pandit—of letters. He wrote a doctoral dissertation on domestic politics and the external relations of Bangladesh for the political science department of Jamia Mil-



S.S. Mohapatra

lia University and can now call himself a doctor of politics.

Fighter Turns Writer

In Namairakpam Bisheswar's case, the pen has finally proved to be mightier than the sword. Once a dreaded guerrilla of Manipur and now a sedate independent MLA, he is all set to win acclaim as a writer. He has handed over the manuscript of his memories, recounting his days as a guerrilla, to an Imphal journalist who is now looking for a publisher. Thirty-eight-year old Bisheswar, an asthmatic, wrote the book, entitled *Confessions from the Deathbed* last year while in solitary confinement at the Imphal central jail. Unwilling to be stifled by poor health, he has bigger

plans: to float a political party which will fight for more autonomy for the north-eastern states and will serve as an over-ground link with PLA guerrillas. Though he wishes to meet other non-Congress(I) politicians of his region everyday, he cannot because there are too many restrictions on his movements. He frequently takes ill and had to be rushed to Vellore in mid-April for treatment.

What is worse, he even fears reprisals from Oinam Sudhir Singh, another guerrilla, who was attacked by Bisheswar's men in Imphal six years ago.

The Grand Seine

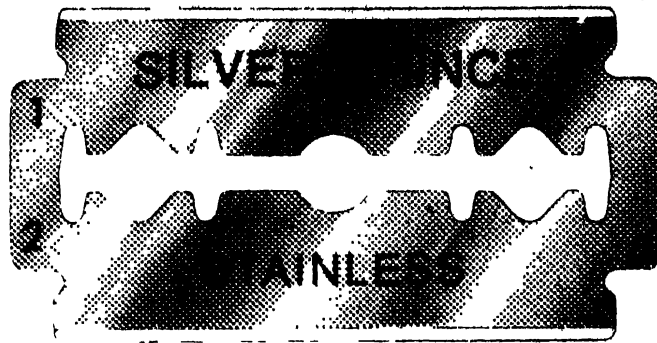
Paris will see a *mela* in June when Dashrath Patel, the aesthete's aesthetic, helped by architect Krishna Menon, organises a dance along the Seine. The year of India in France will never leave Paris quite the same again: the one-and-a-half kilometre stretch from Trocadero to the banks of the Seine will be shut to traffic for over a day for this happening. Dancers from all over our country will move from

one end of the newly-created Espace Indien to the other. Meanwhile, on the first floor of the Eiffel Tower draped with the colours of the tricolour, the French President Francois Mitterrand and the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, will toast the year of India and France. The two leaders had originally planned to sail down the Seine, pouring into it from their Kerala snake boats—waters of the sacred rivers of India.

Luxuriant India

The honeymoon is still going on. Nicholas Wapshott, features editor of *The Observer*, brought bride Louise Nicholson to India in 1980 "for a month in paradise." The groom has long since gone back, but paradise for Louise Nicholson is a renewable commodity and India a magnificent obsession. Hence her efficient and recently-published, witty book: *India in Luxury: A Practical Guide for the Discerning Traveller*. To promote her book freelance writer Louise Nicholson is back in India

again. Says this former employee of Christie's (the famous auctioneers): "The criteria for luxury is not pressing buttons." The access to her India is easier if you stay in a "top hotel and are free to move about" India other than the Red Fort or Amber Palace. Hers is the diarist's India made up of the street people; the "pavement barbers and the teeth beauticians." The Raj is now relegated to celluloid but India is still about the only place you can be a *raja*—of the health clubs.



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Gandhi's Many Facets

The obsession with Mahatma Gandhi is never ending. Richard Attenborough's film touched raw nerves of Indian historians and academics. The film, which bagged eight Oscars, led to a rediscovery of the Mahatma. Or, a reaffirmation, as is the case with Dr B.R. Nanda's well-written *Gandhi and His Critics* (Oxford University Press), which, as the author states, is a 'clarification of misunderstanding, particularly in the West about Mahatma Gandhi. And so, we have many facets of Gandhi: Gandhi the Brahmachari, Gandhi the revolutionary, Gandhi the husband, Gandhi the father, Gandhi the



B.R. NANDA

man and Gandhi the social reformer. Nanda contends that most of the criticisms, doubts and distortions provoked by the film are repetitions of what was in fact said about Gandhi during his lifetime.

An Architect's Delight

It certainly is a season of splendour. The other coffee table glossy is *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India 1660-1947* by Philip Davies. The author attempts to study the unique Anglo-Indian style of architecture which emerged over the British period. The book is said to be the first attempt by an architectural historian to look at the entire period of British India and to, as the blurb says, "apply the new ideas and approaches for which that field is particularly noted."

Davies shows how in the late 18th century, when British aspirations had become overtly imperial—going far beyond trade—architecture began to be used as an instrument of policy. It could, according to the blurb again, "be cheaper than sepoy in a country where power was judged by its outward expression." Davies, whose venture has been partially financed by grants from the British Academy, takes us through Madras and Calcutta, where vi-

sions of classical antiquity were recreated by the seashore or the riverside; the quaintness of totipot hill stations like Ooty and Simla and the nearly demarcated military cantonments.

The east and west began to mix in architecture with the Gothic revival which Davies maintains coincided closely with the 1857 mutiny. This style was flexible and could be adapted to local conditions and materials. The rest of the 19th century witnessed a tug-of-war—often strangely creative—between the aesthetic imperialists and the advocates of the revival of the 'native' styles. The 20th century was no less exciting. Calcutta's Victoria Memorial, described as 'ill-disciplined', was significant and Lutven's Delhi was the culminating splendour of the Raj, especially the Victoria's house—a consolation for the ending of this particular chapter in India's history. The book has been published by Dasa Media.

Inside the Third Reich

Nobel laureate Heinrich Böll's autobiography is rather unique in that it covers the German author's four formative years of late boyhood 1933-1937, which coincide with Hitler's rise to power. Böll did not join the Hitler Youth "I simply could not join. I did not join, and that was that." But only two of his classmates thought like him. This memoir, *What's to Become of the Boy* (Secker and Warburg), reveals, with quiet and ironic intensity, how a sensitive adolescent could perceive the impact of Nazism on his family, his friends and his teachers in his hometown

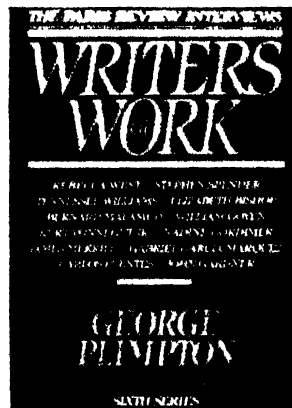
Heinrich
BÖLL

**What's
to Become of
the Boy?**

A MEMOIR

of Cologne. Böll shows the origins of radical protest which were to surface later. There are touches of humour against the sombre background of Hitler's Germany.

What the Authors Say



Writers are under the microscope again. The sixth series of *The Paris Review Interviews: Writers Work* (Secker and Warburg), spans three continents and cuts across nearly half a century. The novelists who feature in this book are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Nadine Gordimer, Rebecca West, Tennessee Williams and Bernard Malamud. This series is edited by George Plimpton.

The Poorest of the Poor

While the UN decade for women comes to an end during the middle of the year, India has over the last few years seen a mushrooming of books on women. Women's studies have been included as part of the curricula of several colleges. Vikas Publishing House in 1983 launched 'Shakti' exclusively devoted to publishing studies on women. *Tyranny of the household*, a collection of essays on women in poor households edited by Nirmala Banerjee and De-

vaki Jain is one of the forthcoming titles. The plight of women in poor households has increasingly gained importance in women's studies. In fact, several seminars have been held on the subject because women in poor households are really the poorest of the poor. This volume exposes the abysmally low evaluation and almost non-existent recognition of women's role in households, a major factor in the status and welfare of women in this country.



**Our dudhwala
often travels with us
on our holiday!**

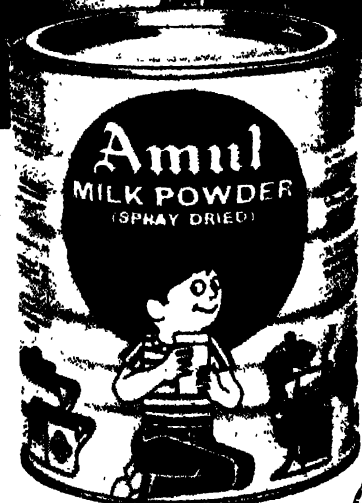
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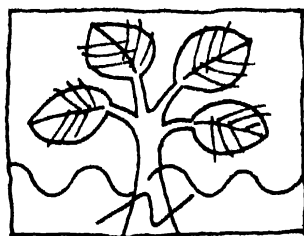


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Electrifying Growth



Researchers are finding evidence that sensitivity of plant cells to electric current can be exploited to enhance their growth. Two scientists of the Imperial College, London, K. S. Rathore and A. Goldsworthy, applied direct current of about a millionth of an

ampere to cells of tobacco plants grown in laboratory flasks. They reported that the growth rate was stimulated by about 70 per cent when the culture was made negative, but current in the reverse direction slightly inhibited growth.

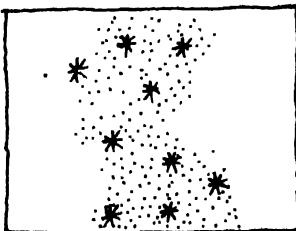
The Instant Cleaner

A 76-year-old ex-actor from Britain has invented a gel which can remove practically any stain (including ink, grease, blood, oil-based paint, shoe polish, iodine and rust) from natural or synthetic fibres simply by rubbing it in and then pressing with a wet cloth. The components of the gel—Lightning Riddit—are secret, but it is claimed that it is not poisonous nor does it contain chemicals like ammonia or carbon tetrachloride found in most other instant cleaners. If the stain is small, the cleansing operation can be carried out immediately. A small pad is placed behind the stain. Riddit put on with a finger, and then a wet cloth is applied to send the discolouring agent into the pad. If the material is padded like the shoulder of a jacket for instance, no pad is needed, nor is it necessary for dealing with carpets and upholstered furniture. Should the whole article need washing—for instance a table cloth on which spilled wine has dried or a towel with dried blood—then the gel can be applied and the whole thing washed. The stain will not be transferred to anything else as it dissolves in the water.

Galaxies May Have Been Quasars

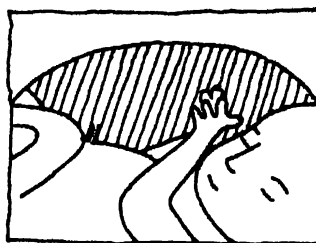
Astronomers have discovered strong evidence that many galaxies, including the Milky Way, may have once been quasars or huge objects that produced the light of billions of suns. The findings by Dr Wallace Sargent, a professor of astronomy at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and Alexi Filippenko, a former Caltech graduate student, are the first to clearly support a theory that several normal galaxies are actually dying quasars.

In their study, Mr Filippenko and Dr Sargent used the 200-inch (508-cm) Hale Telescope at Palomar Observatory to survey 75 bright galaxies of 10 million to 50 million light-years from earth. The astronomers measured the spectra of light from the galaxies' centres. "The result was that, in 19 to 28 of the cases, the mission lines characteristic of quasars became evident," Mr Filippenko said.



Mobile Incubator for Babies

In England, a mobile incubator has been specifically designed to protect and treat any emergency that may occur when transferring delicate premature babies from local hospitals to specialist units located at a distance of 80 kilometres. A baby is transferred from a standard static incubator unit powered by mains electricity on the ward, to the mobile powered by battery. Once safely located in the ambulance, the unit is linked to the vehicle's own battery which is constantly charged on the journey. On arrival at the hospital the unit is once again switched to battery operation until the baby is admitted to the ward. A nurse travelling with the baby has a comprehensive range of life support equipment on the self-contained unit. Respiration, heart rate, oxygen levels in the temperature and humidity can be continuously monitored. Space is provided in the unit for syringe pump, an emergency box, and storage is available for drugs, syringes and dressing. Mr Brian King, principal technician at the Bio-Medical Engineering Unit of the North Staffordshire Polytechnic in the English Midlands, designed the unit to meet the requirements of the nursing staff.

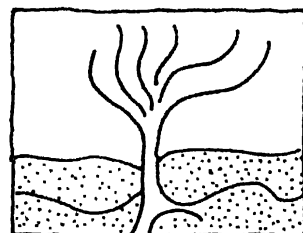


Did Life Begin in Clay?

Scientists in California have reported a major discovery which reinforces the emerging theory that life on earth began in clay rather than the sea. The discovery, announced at a symposium recently, showed that ordinary clay contained two basic properties essential to life: the capacity to store and transfer energy. With such energy, coming from radioactive decay and other sources, the early clays could have acted as "chemical factories" for processing inorganic raw materials into the more complex molecules from which first life rose about four billion years ago.

In their analysis of common ceramic clay, the scientists said that they had found evidence that "mistakes" made normally and repeatedly in the formation of clay crystals presumably create the conditions by which the material traps energy and holds it for perhaps thousands of years. Such defects in the clay microstructure could also be sites for storing information necessary to direct the chemical reactions and organise the eventual proto-organisms. So, if the theory can be confirmed it would seem that an accumulation of chemical mistakes led to life on earth.

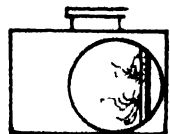
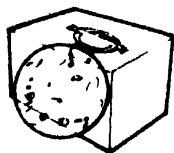
These findings, according to the chemists, do not prove the clay-life theory but make it a more reasonable explanation worthy of further research. The research was conducted by a team of scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Ames Research Centre in Mountainview, California where studies of the origin of life have been under way for years, in part to learn how to search for life on other worlds.



Illustrations: Prabir Sen

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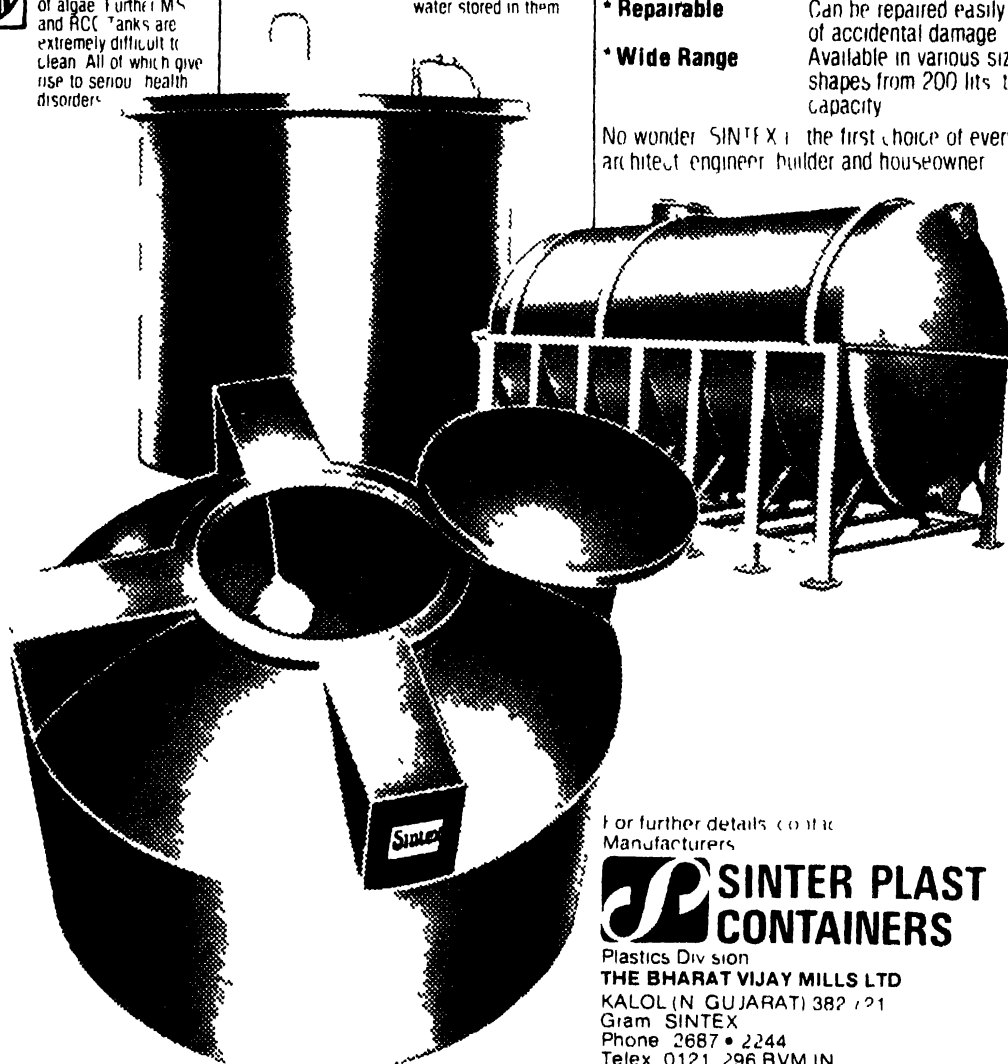
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VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 12 MAY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is an extremely lucky week for those in love you can go ahead with marriage plans. Businessmen and professionals will also find this phase favourable. Friends and relatives will keep you busy during the weekend. This is also the right time to pursue legal matters. Your financial prospects look bright. But do not neglect your health or diet.

Good dates 12, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction South



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Businessmen should make the most out of this favourable phase do not hesitate to undertake risky deals. Professionals will also make steady headway a promotion cannot be ruled out. Creative artists and writers will benefit from this lucky period. On the financial front gains from unexpected sources are in store. Love and marriage are well governed.

Good dates 13, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction North west



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) A fair measure of success is in store for most of you this week. But to reach it you will make steady progress but they should guard against deception. This is also a favourable week for exercise, activity and adventurous plans. At home, your children will come out with flying colours in competition. A pleasure trip you were looking forward to is in the offing.

Good dates 14, 16 and 17
Lucky numbers 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction East



LEO (15 August—14 September) On the financial front unexpected gains through speculation or inheritance are indicated. The home front will remain peaceful and will give you the inspiration to take up challenging ventures. This is a lucky week for businessmen and professionals. Politicians will also find this phase favourable. This is a good week for love and marriage negotiations.

Good dates 13, 15 and 17
Lucky numbers 5, 7 and 9
Favourable direction West



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Success on all fronts is a certainty for you, but do not mix business with pleasure. On the professional front you will gain through inheritance. The domestic front will add to your joys this week. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. Your health will show definite signs of improvement. Watch out for a pleasant surprise towards the end of the week.

Good dates 14, 16 and 18
Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction North east



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) There are bright chances that those looking for jobs will find one during this period. For those employed in the private sector a promotion or a posting to a place of your liking cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will bag lucrative deals. The home front will remain peaceful but an elderly member of your family may suddenly fall ill.

Good dates 12, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers 1, 7 and 8
Favourable direction West



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) The stars foretell a bleak period for you. Professionals should avoid disputes with those in authority. Businessmen should postpone expansion plans. The financial front is equally disappointing. At home your wife may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden. Watch your health closely. However, this is a good period for marriage negotiations.

Good dates 13, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction South



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Creative artists and sportsmen will earn rare honours. Professionals and businessmen will also forge ahead. However, politicians are advised to keep a low profile during this period. Your prospects are bright on the economic front but avoid extravagance. The domestic front will remain inspiring. But keep a sharp eye on your health and diet.

Good dates 15, 17 and 18
Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction North



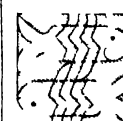
CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) The stars shine brightly on all your efforts this week. Those in profession will win the praise of their employers while businessmen will get fresh opportunities to expand their business. Writers and poets will be rewarded. The domestic and the financial front will not cause problems. Lovers will find this phase favourable. But watch your health closely.

Good dates 13, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 7
Favourable direction South west



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) You are advised not to make any changes in your career during this week. Lovers should postpone marriage plans, consult elders and avoid controversies at all costs. Businessmen will encounter opposition. However, financial gains are in store for you. A pleasure trip towards the middle of the week is in the offing.

Good dates 16, 17 and 18
Lucky numbers 3, 6 and 8
Favourable direction East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) If you are in love and waiting for an opportunity to get married, this is the opportune time to do so. Students should not fritter away the opportunities that come their way. Academicians will also find this period favourable. Your economic prospects look bright. The domestic front will remain peaceful. Your health will improve markedly during this week.

Good dates 12, 17 and 18
Lucky numbers 1, 8 and 9
Favourable direction North west

14 August)
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For those born between 15 April and 14 May

good in oratory and your personality inspires awe. You are also social and love to be well do well if you join politics or the administrative services. Women born during this period are good housewives provided they check their extravagant tendencies.

THIS INDIA



SIWAN Male teachers of the local Pakari Middle School have distributed prizes among students for a peculiar cause. Earlier, lady teachers were appointed in this school but later on male teachers were posted. At the time of the roll call the students used to say, "Present Didi-ji", even when male teachers were present. So, as an inducement, these teachers started distributing fruits among those students who would reply "Yes, Sir". On 6 April 69 students were given prizes who said, "Yes Sir" to male teachers at the time of the roll call—*Searchlight* (Ajey Kumar, Patna)

JAIPUR While the Prime Minister is preparing to take the nation into the 21st century, the student community here appears to have already made a quantum leap. The recent incident at Mohanlal Sukhadia University in Udaipur, where a student was caught copying in the examination using the latest technology, proves this. The student, Satyadeo, who was appearing for his M. Com. examination, had come to the hall with a micro cassette recorder tied to his leg and the earphone, linked by a thin wire to the tape, hidden in his shirt sleeve. The boy had brought a number of pre-recorded cassettes, one of which was in the tape recorder and the rest outside the examination hall. He confidently put his wrist close to his ear, switched on the tape, and started copying the pre-recorded answers. As soon as one tape was over he would go out of the examination hall on some pretext to replace the tape. But he could not escape the shrewd eyes of the examiners and was caught red-handed—*The Telegraph* (R K Jaisansaria, Calcutta)

TIRUCHI Two private cement factories in Tiruchi district are vying with

each other in offering gold coins to their workers as incentive bonus, apart from profit sharing bonus. The Chettinad Cement Corporation at Puliur near Karur presented gold coins, each weighing six and a half grams of gold, to all its workers on 5 April. The Dalmia cement factory is offering seven grams of gold to each of the 1,500 workers—*Indian Express* (B Meenakshi Sundaram, Trichy)

MIDNAPORE Two railway employees of Kharagpur were detained on 10 April for allegedly running a "railway administration" in the Kharagpur division of the South eastern Railway during the past few months. Earlier, five railway employees, including the head clerk in the signal and telecommunication section of the personnel department at the office of the divisional railway manager, Kharagpur, and the son of a railway guard were arrested. "Fake" appointments were given to at least ten people in Kharagpur, Dhalbhumgar and Tatanagar during the past 11 months against thousands of rupees—*The Statesman* (A K Ghosh, Calcutta)

NEW DELHI Did a letter from a dacoit in Madhya Pradesh on 8 April send a shiver down the spine of veteran Ranji cricketer Rajinder Goel? In the normal circumstances it might have, but this letter from dacoit Bhura Singh from Madhya Pradesh congratulated him for bagging more than 600 Ranji wickets. Bhura Singh, who had surrendered to the Madhya Pradesh government and is now serving his sentence in the Gwalior central jail, came across a sports magazine which mentioned Goel's feat. He promptly despatched a message to the cricketer, wishing him more success—*The Hindu* (M Govindarajan, Madras)

BOMBAY For the sake of a tiffin box, a chivalrous male employee in the Bombay municipal corporation fractured his leg recently. The story goes that a woman clerk had left the box on the window. In the course of an animated conversation with her friends, her hand swept the box, which landed on a roof. A chivalrous colleague rushed to retrieve it and, brushing aside suggestions that he use a ladder to get down, jumped ten feet and crashed through the roof—*The Times of India* (Robin Viegas, Bombay)

KADIRI Are calves carnivorous? The answer seems to be an emphatic 'yes'. A calf with Mr Subba Reddy of Enmulavaripalli near here not only eats meat but relishes it too. It has eaten as many as 10 chickens so far—*Newstoday* (Y Murthy, R Udayagiri)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Our enemy is the Congress(I), (it is) they (who) destroyed the Akal Takht. In fact, it is a fight between the Akal Takht and the Delhi Takht—Sant Longowal in *The Telegraph*

Mr J B Patnaik is no Mr Ramakrishna Hegde who had resigned on moral grounds—Biju Patnaik, after the Congress(I)'s debacle in the byelections in Orissa, in *The Times of India*

Byelections are like a mere sentence in a book. A sentence may be badly phrased here and there, but that does not take away from the merit of the book—Srikant Verma in *India Today*

I am grateful to Sarojbabu (Saroj Mukherjee) for his early realisation that Mrs Gandhi was a democrat. The Marxists normally take 30 years to realise facts. They took 28 years to realise that Netaji was a patriot—Pranab Mukherjee in *The Telegraph*

Some say that the United Nations is a talking shop, at least talking is better than not talking at all—Paul Lusaka, president of the UN General Assembly in *The Hindustan Times Sunday Magazine*

People get in trouble when they're talking about each other instead of when they're talking to each other—Ronald Reagan, on why he wanted to meet Gorbachev, in *International Herald Tribune*

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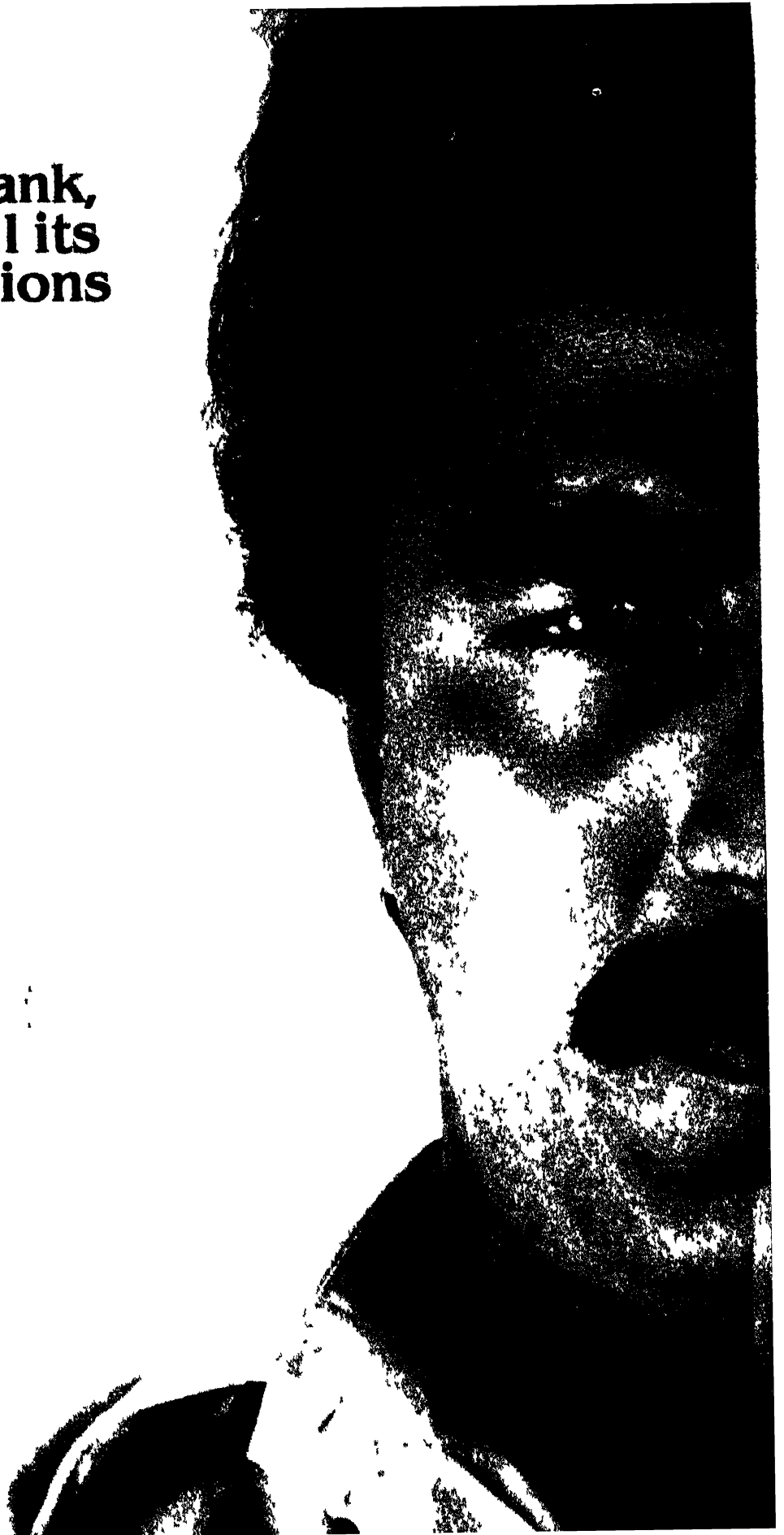
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VARIETY

Chess

Following his humiliating defeat at the hand of Vassily Smyslov in the Candidates semi-finals Hungarian grandmaster Zoltan Ribli has fully recovered his form. Sharing second place at Tilburg, he finished well above his compatriot and great rival Lajos Portisch partly avenging the Candidates debacle with the following deft display seemingly conjuring something from nothing.

White Z Ribli Black V Smyslov Neo Grunfeld Defence

1 N-KB3 P-Q4 2 P-KN3 B-N5
3 B-N2 P-QB3 4 P-N3 N-Q2
5 B-N2 KN-B3 6 O-O P-KN3

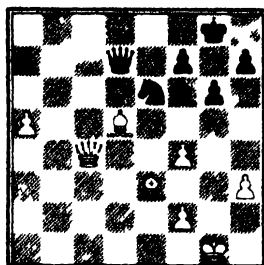
Smyslov has relied heavily on these Grunfeld like set ups in recent years. More classical here is of course 6 P-K3

7 P-Q4 B-N2 8 QN-Q2 O-O
9 R-K1 R-K1 10 P-B4 BxN
11 PxBI?

An interesting decision. If 11 BxB P-K4 or 11 NxB N-K5 Black seems to have equal play.

11 P-B4! 12 P-B4 P-K3
13 R-QB1 P-N3 14 N-B1 R-QB1
15 N-K3

Smyslov (Black)



Ribli to move (White)

Forcing the tension in the centre to resolve itself

15 PxQP 16 BxP PxP
17 NxP Q-K2 18 Q-K2 R(K)-Q1
19 R(K)-Q1 N-K1 20 B-K3!

An important moment. After the exchange of bishops Black would stand no worse but now he is haunted by the bishop pair

aimed at his queenside

20 N-N1 21 P-KR3 N-Q3
22 NxN RxR 23 RxR QxN
24 O-B4

White now has a new trump control of the QB file

24 B-B3 25 B-B3 O-K2
26 P-QR4!

The start of a winning plan

26 N-Q2 27 P-QN4 P-K4
28 R-Q1 PxP 29 PxP!

Another fine decision. If 29 BxP N-K4 simplifies

29 N-B1 30 RxR QxR
31 B-Q5 Q-Q2 32 P-R5 PxP

Fatal. He must play 32 B-Q1 32 P-R6 B-B3 when White will try to manoeuvre his queen to QN7

33 PxP N-K3

DIAGRAM

34 BxN! PxP 35 P-R6! B-K2
36 Q-Q4 Resigns

A game of deceptive simplicity

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Learners at the game are always told not to double a high contract when this may help to place the cards. Experts tend not to pay much heed to this advice partly because they often make imaginative doubles based on the assumption that partner will hold unexpected tricks.

Consider West's position on the following deal after South has bid spades and diamonds. East has made a free bid in hearts and South has advanced to Three Diamonds. It is tempting to double but

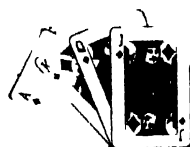
Dealer East E-W vulnerable

♠ 7 5		♠ Q 9 8 2
♥ Q J 9		♥ K 7 6 5 3
♦ A Q J 4		♦ 7
♣ K Q J 5		♣ 8 6 4

N
 W E
 S
 A K J 10 6
 A 2
 10 9 8 5 3
 2

At the first table in the final of the Vanderbilt Cup in America the bidding went

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	dble	1NT	No
3 ♦	No	No	2 ♥



South won the club lead in dummy and finessed ♠ J. He then led a diamond to the king and made the contract easily enough losing three diamonds and one heart. At the other table

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	dble	No	2 ♥
3 ♦	No	3 ♥	dble
No	No	4 ♦	No
No	dble	No	No

You too might have doubled on the West hand! He led the king of clubs declarer finessed in spades and led a cunning ♦ 8. West went up with the ace and punched declarer with a club. South led ♦ 3. West split his honours and the king won. Now another spade finesse spade winners and West made just two diamonds and one heart.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- What is the study of the punishment and treatment of criminals called?
- With which country is the name of dictator Juan Peron associated?
- What is a photograph produced with out a camera by the action of light and shade on sensitised paper called?
- Apart from India one other Asian country celebrates its independence day on 15 August. Which country?
- In education what is a sandwich course?
- Sinn Fein (Ourselves Alone) was a political party founded in 1900 with the

- intention of seeking complete independence. In which country was it formed?
- In which year was the first television centre in India set up?
- What is thalassophobia the fear of?
- When did hockey first become an Olympic sport?
- Where in India is the Military Staff College?
- In Roman mythology who is the messenger of the gods?
- Who is a a bunsling?

12 A traitor who collaborates with his country and occupied his country

- 1 Penology
- 2 Argentina
- 3 A photograph
- 4 South Korea. It is called Liberation Day
- 5 A course in college which has a period of industrial work in between regular academic courses
- 6 Ireland
- 7 In 1959. It was set up on an experimental basis
- 8 The sea
- 9 1908
- 10 At Wellington near Otago
- 11 Mercury

ANSWERS

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that knows
how to treat
a customer.**

It's not really much of a choice.

**You can continue to put up
with the delays, the indifference,
the crowds and the confusion.**

**Or you can find a bank that
treats you the way a bank should.**

With a little courtesy.

A little attention.

And a little enthusiasm.

**At HongkongBank you will find
all three in plenty. What you
won't find is the aloofness
that some people seem to read
into an international name.**

**Walk into our nearest branch.
Look around and see the difference
for yourself.**

Is it much of a choice?



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Merchant Banking Division Bombay

The British Bank of the Middle East Bombay

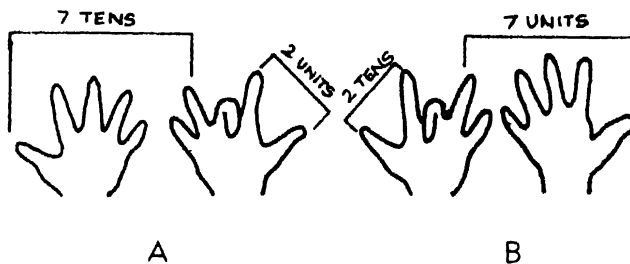
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TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

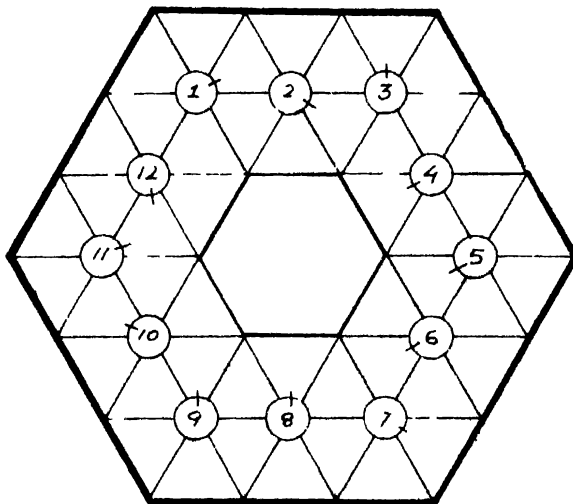
Really?



Did you know that you have your 9's tables literally at the tips of your fingers?

Hold both your hands with the palms facing you. Count on your fingers from the left beginning with the left thumb as 1, index finger as 2, etc. If you wish to find 8×9 (or eight nines) bend the 8th finger, as shown in the illustration A above. The fingers to the left of the bent finger count as 'TENS' and to the right of the bent finger count as 'UNITS'. For 8×9 , you get 7 tens and 2 units or 72. For 3×9 , bend the 3rd finger from the left thumb as shown in illustration B. You get, 2 tens and 7 units, $3 \times 9 = 27$.

Word Play



This word maze will contain 12 words, when completed, one letter per space, reading in either clockwise or anti clockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below.

- 1 Drove'n turn 'd around, to sell
- 2 Havens upset, with a blade
- 3 Beat u
- 4 Woof Woofed
- 5 Appeared to be
- 6 A smile for a photograph
- 7 A product of cut and hog?
- 8 Cited from a text
- 9 Smiled like a ray
- 10 Melanchly or grave
- 11 A mixed up she dot gave a party
- 12 Gave in

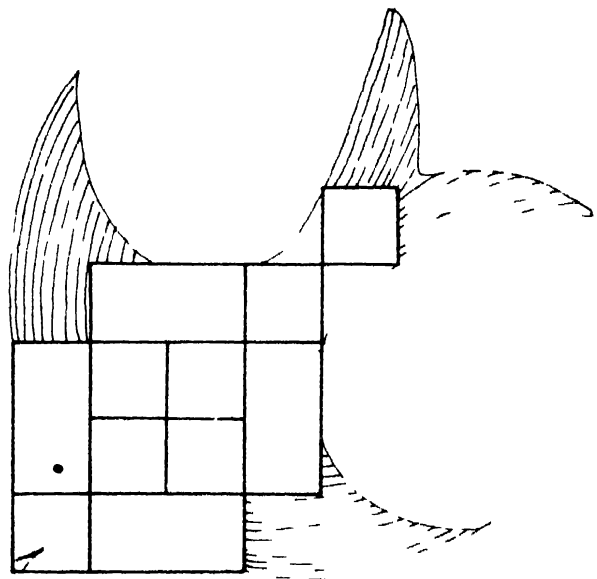
Witsharpener

Four girls in college aged 18, 19, 20, and 21 years who entered a swimming competition were placed in the first, second, third and fourth places. Their names were Brinda, Sarala, Maya and Rashmee and their surnames were Singh, Das, Puri and Lal. We know that

- a) Rashmee Das is two years older than Maya who came neither first nor last
- b) Miss Lal is 19 years old and Miss Puri came third
- c) Sarala, the 20 year old, was neither first nor second

Given these clues, can you give the full name of each girl and say how each girl fared in the competition?

Figure it Out



How many squares in this fish?
How many rectangles?

Blankagrams

The Lord be — — — — — ' My days of — — — — —
— — — — — are over I have, at last, found a suitable maid. I can sleep in peace at night, instead, of being in and out of bed, changing — — — — — She is quite funny, though! And a bit cheeky! When the Lord and master left for work, she ' — — — — — ' as she said, bossing over me. It was difficult keeping a straight face.

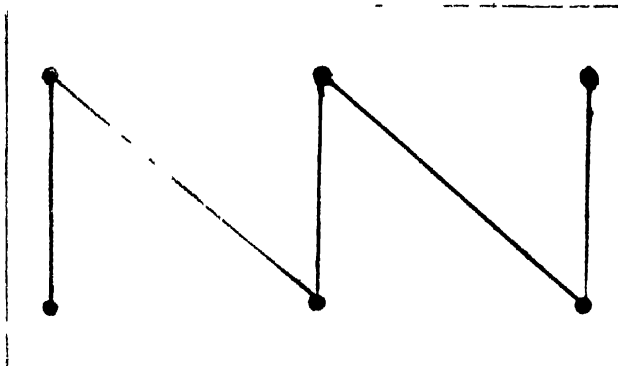
The blanks in the above spaces can be filled in by words made up of different arrangements of the same letters. Can you find these words?

Quick Think

If every European woman who is entertained at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi wears a long dress, and every woman visiting the Rashtrapati Bhavan in a long dress has been English, can we assume that every English woman who wears a long dress is entertained at the Rashtrapati Bhavan?

TEASERS

Join the Dots

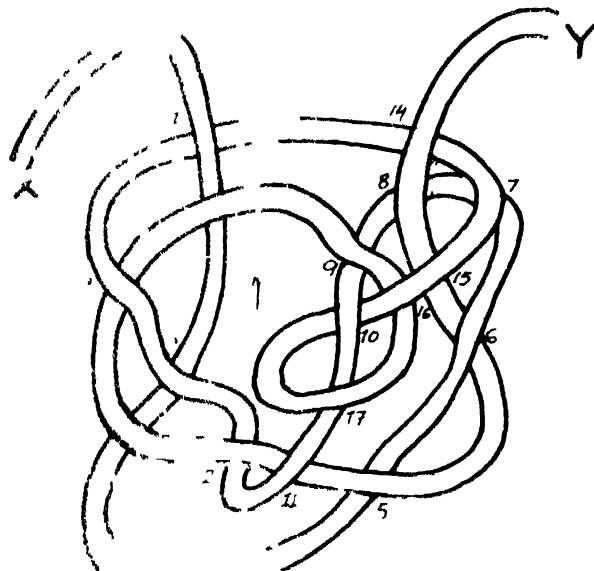


sh... is one way of joining the six dots. In how
 can you join these six dots mirror
 have not been counted separ

Quick Think

When temperature is the same regardless of whether it
 is expressed in Fahrenheit or Centigrade?

Shape Sleuth

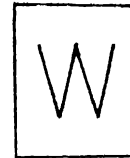


Some tangle this twine has got into! If you pulled at
 the ends of this complicated looking 'knot', would you
 actually get a knot or not?

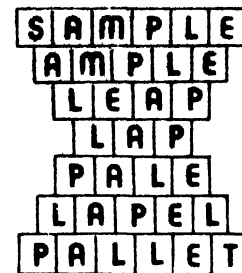
Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Figure it Out: Piece no 20 is the odd one out

Mindbender:



Blankagrams:



What's in a Word School

Shape Sleuth: e does not work out

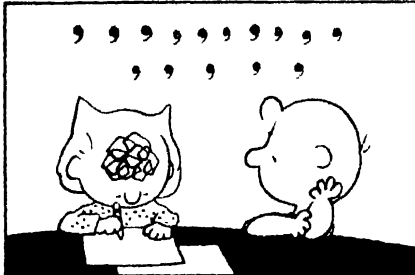
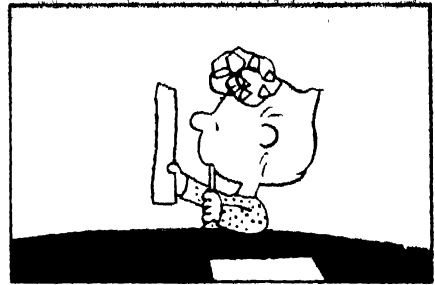
Cryptocross:



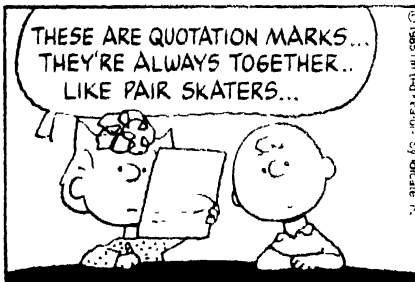
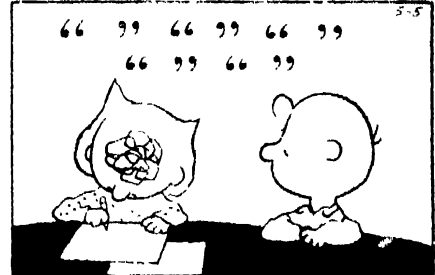
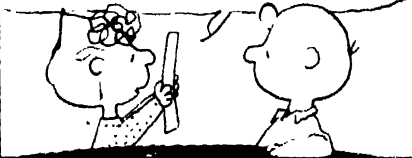
Witsharpener. Since half the girls completed 5 books
 each and the other half only 3, the average number of
 books each girl filled in was 4. We already know that the
 boys filled in 4 books each. Therefore, the average
 number of books completed by each student is 4. Since
 there were 60 boys and girls in the class, 240 books of
 notes were filled in all.

PEANUTS

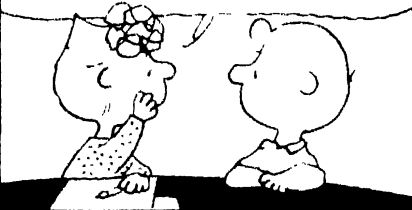
featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ



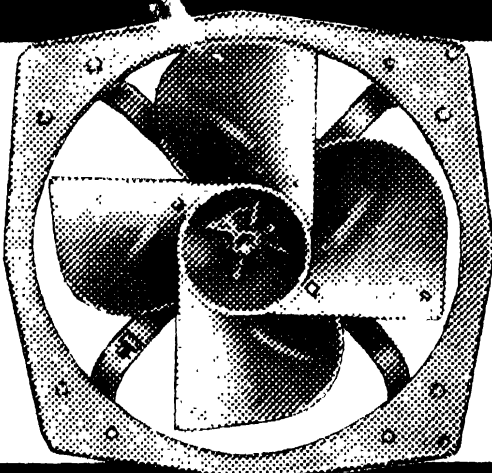
THESE ARE COMMAS AND THESE ARE POSSESSIVES...COMMAS DO ALL THE WORK AND POSSESSIVES GET ALL THE CREDIT...THEY HATE EACH OTHER!



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Children of famous people don't always become famous. That's the case with Kamia Vasudev, daughter of popular writer Uma Vasudev. Kamia has since long been trying to get a break in the tinsel world, but without success. Her mother and equally famous aunt, Dr Aruna Vasudev tried their utmost to influence her career in films but it just did not take off. In commercial film circles producers had never heard of either Uma Vasudev or Aruna Vasudev and Kamia came back disappointed every time she knocked at a producer's door. The only time she found work was when Dasari Narayana Rao gave her a brief role in *Aaj ka MLA*. The film was a fiasco at the box office and ruined the chances of Kamia who was expecting a great break. After making rounds again Kamia found a side role in a film called *Vishwas* with Raj Kaur as the lead man.

The attack of gossip magazines against Gulzar continues unabated. But Gulzar is not worried and he has turned a deaf ear to what the film journalists write about him. The virulent attack against Gulzar began with his decision to marry Rakhee. This marriage can never last, declared the Bombay press and rejoiced when what they had presaged for the couple came true. That was however, not the end of Gulzar and Rakhee as far as the press was concerned. A spate of 'investigative stories' appeared on why the marriage did not last. Why can't the press stop meddling in the private lives of people?

Gulzar seeing the stories in the press, retorted "I don't know why they (the film press) are so worried about us." Rakhee has gone a step further. She has in her own words, just "stopped reading gossip magazines."

Things are hotting up on the Zeenat Aman Mazhar Khan front. But how the two stars came to be linked is still baffling many. At the time when the two came together Zeenat was having a torrid affair with Frank Norino. "I have finally found the man whose child I would like to have," Zeenat had said and she was taken quite seriously. She claimed to have found happiness at last. Mazhar himself, was facing difficult times. His career which had only recently looked up, was once again at the bottom. He was looking desperately for ways to get back into the limelight. His family life was going steady and he was a loving husband and

father. Then came *Bhawan Junction*, the film that changed it all. Zeenat baby and Mazhar spent a lot of time shooting together in Kathmandu which gave rise to a spate of stories about a passionate romance in the offing. For Zeenat of course it was just another fling, but for Mazhar the gossip led to a lot of trouble.

Shiva ka Insaaf the three dimensional thriller may be running to packed houses throughout the country but Jackie Shroff is not happy with the film since his acting has been overshadowed by the technological marvels. Jackie has even decided not to work with Raj Shrivastava, once his best friend.



Amrita Singh bowled by Ravi Shastri

The "Champion of Champions" Ravi Shastri came back to Bombay, the city where his love for cricket began to a rousing welcome. The welcome accorded to the star was something unprecedented in the city's history. But for young Ravi Shastri Bombay introduced him to a first of another kind. It was his first exposure to malicious gossip. His name was linked with the 'spoilt little daughter' of Rukhsana Sultana Amrita Singh. The photographs of the cricket hero and the rising starlet were generously displayed in at least three popular gossip magazines. The magazines talked about how Amrita was broken hearted after Sunil Deol (of *Betaab* fame) ditched her and how she was desperate for a replacement. The stories also mentioned how she chanced to meet Ravi Shastri at a party and the cricketer fell head over heels in love with her. The rumours of a budding romance travelled so fast that several regional magazines picked up the romantic story.

What is the reason for the uneasy silence between Shabana Azmi and Smita Patil? The two heroines it may be recalled have been waging a pitched battle of words. And guess about what? On their own talents. The reason we discover is that the two have been cast together in as many as three forthcoming films. They have stopped making snide remarks against each other lest it affect their work in the films. But how will the two who have always been at loggerheads work together?

Aruna is determined to fill the void left by Sri Devi in Tamil films. She is trying to please the producers by willingly accepting roles that require very little clothes. But does she have the talents of the shapely figure of Sri Devi?

DELHI DIARY

Who's Right?

Two AICC(H) general secretaries contradicted each other openly in the press recently. A meeting of the Congress(H) working committee (CWC(H)) was being held on 21 April. Srikanth Verma, former fourthist and official spokesman of the party, had announced that a session of the AICC(H) would be held in the capital on 5 May to mark the beginning of the party's centenary celebrations. A day later, G. Karupppiah Moopanar told the press that Verma was wrong. The session if any was to be held after the CWC(H) met and decided about it. Considering that this would be the first AICC(H) meet after Rajiv Gandhi's elevation in the party and the



G. K. Moopanar (left) and Srikanth Verma (right)

government (the last session was held when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister) confusion was created by Moopa-



nar's statement. Was the new leadership averse to holding the session? Stories were immediately afloat about summer

discontent in the party and about the way J.K. Jain won the parliamentary party polls despite a 'directive' against him. There was also talk about a meeting which 107 MPs had held at a senior, but out of power, leader's house. The press briefing after the 21 April meeting, therefore, was awaited with bated breath. This time, both Verma and Moopanar briefed the press. The session was being held on 4 and 5 May, they announced. The confusion created by Moopanar was cleared, but the question still remained: Why had Moopanar opened his mouth? And did his presence at the press conference mean that Srikanth Verma's henceforth should play a firm

Whizkid

When 32-year-old Ranjit Jetyel was suddenly made managing director of the public sector unit Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) on the eve of April 1985, many eyebrows had been raised. Having tackled his assignment creditably so far, which involved dealing with as many as 12 trade unions in the ITDC, Jetyel is about to create yet another record. His three-year term

which is coming to an end in August 1985 may see him take up yet another assignment: that of the chief executive of the prestigious State Trading Corporation of India. He will then become the youngest ever chief executive to have held charge of the STC. The term of the present chief of STC, P.C. Luthar is coming to an end around the same time as Jetyel's term in ITDC. Jetyel may replace Luthar

Changed Names

New Delhi now has two roads named after both Tito and Nasser, the co-founders of the Non-Aligned Movement with Jawaharlal Nehru. A portion of the Outer Ring Road in south Delhi has been dedicated to Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. This road cuts across Josip Broz Tito Marg which runs north to south through posh South Delhi colonies. Nasser's name did not replace any one else. But this was not the case with the other road. When Yugoslav leader Tito was

honoured in 1958, the name which disappeared from Delhi road map was that of the former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. The present Tito Marg, was originally called the Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg. Nobody noticed the change. Apparently, even the children of Lal Bahadur Shastri who are in politics once a cabinet minister in UP and another a Lok Sabha member did not notice the change or even if they did, no one bothered to point out the fallacy.

Creditworthy Indeed!

Now that the dealings of banks and other public financial institutions in the past five years are being scrutinised by the Rajiv Gandhi regime, an interesting story comes to the fore. A credit director, chairman of the Meridian Hotel owned by C.J. International Hotels Ltd. may be telling you one thing but the balance sheets of C.J. International's empire of hotels, the Coca-Cola

king, he now has the 'Camp' range of products. The Rs six crores were advanced against guarantees furnished by Pure Drinks Private Ltd. In 1981, with a paid up capital of Rs 2.55 lakh, the company had reserves and surplus worth Rs 5.889 and accumulated losses worth Rs 1.09.51.680. When the company's worth was minus a crore rupees how was its guarantee accepted? Were the tax returns scrutinised?

Communication Gap

The efficiency of the lack of it in the telephone department was highlighted on 25 April by a political announcement. The residential telephone of Anand Sharma, whose appointment as Indian Youth Congress president was announced in the morning papers that day, was out of order. The ruling party VIPs who wanted to congratulate him could

not get through on phone. When Anand Sharma went to Parliament's Central Hall, the one person who certainly looked embarrassed was communications minister Ram Nivas Mudha. A number of VIPs had complained about Sharma's phone to him that day.

D.E. Nizamuddin

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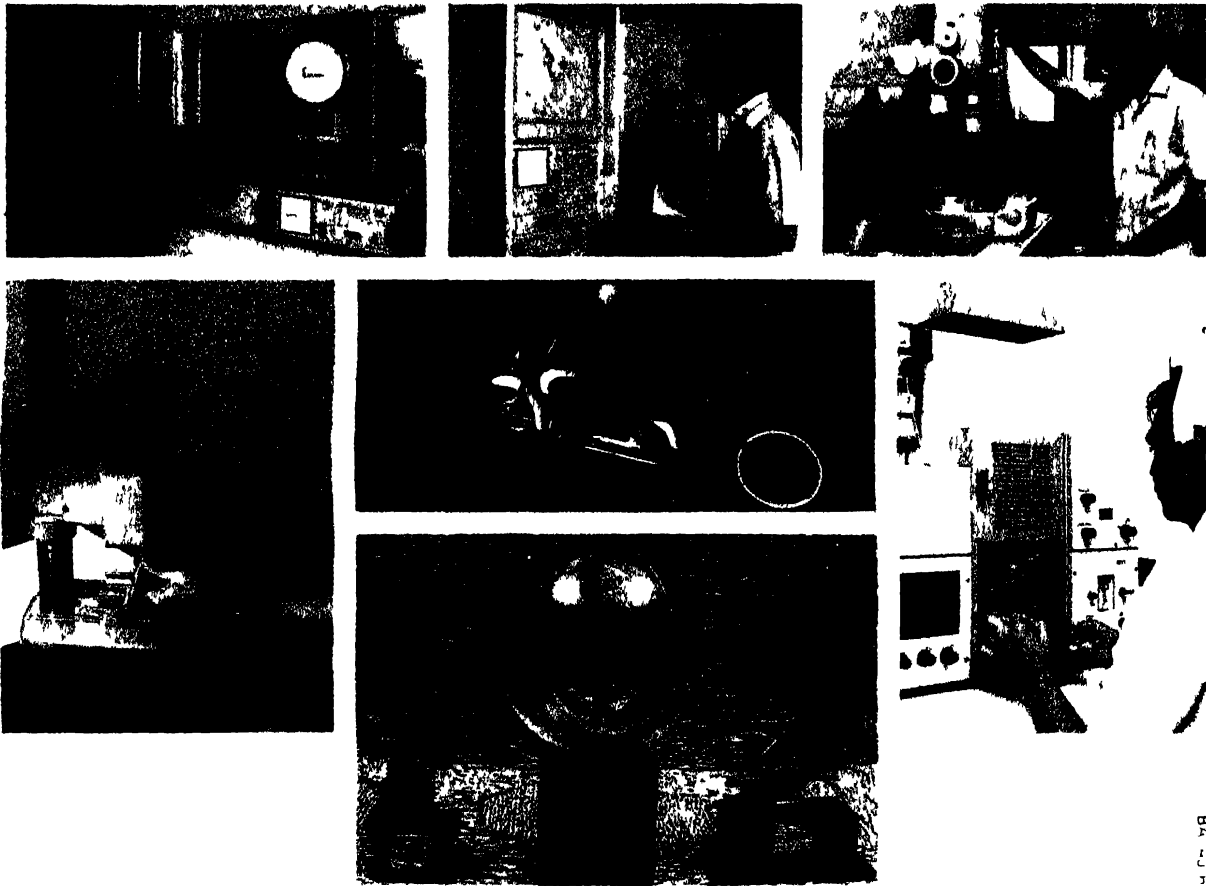


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Interview With Sindhudesh Leader

SUNDAY

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Satwant Singh, accused of assassinating Mrs. Indira Gandhi



A Missing Assassin?

The
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Does anyone remember a hero
21 years after his death?



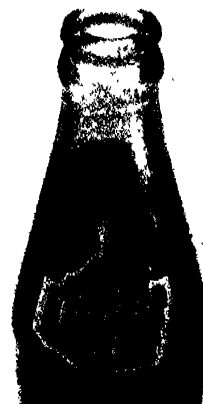


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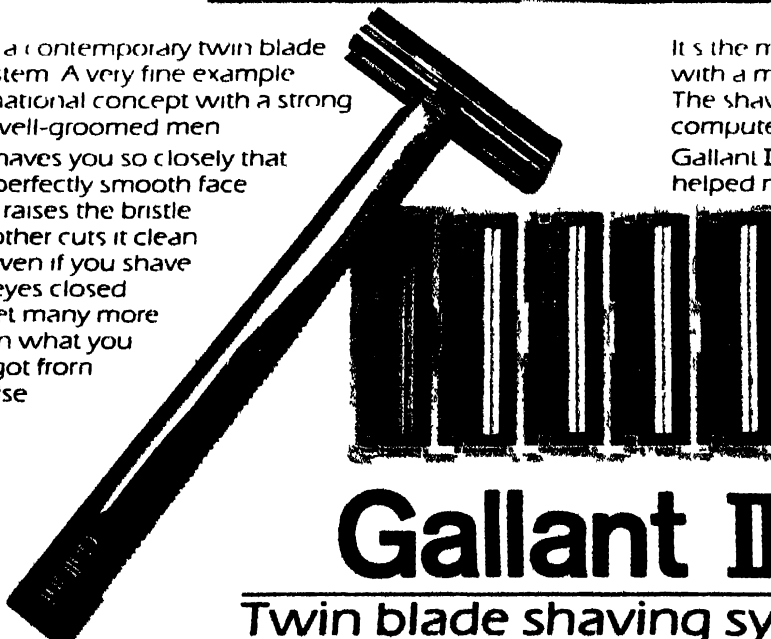
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Shiv Sena Captures Bombay

The performance of the Shiv Sena in the recent Bombay civic elections has emboldened its chief Bal Thackeray, to announce that all non Maharashtrians would be debarred from entering the city. Can our most cosmopolitan city survive the Shiv Sena's parochialism? SUNDAY correspondents find out



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The Post-Nehru Generation

Does anyone remember the first Prime Minister of this country 21 years after his death? SUNDAY conducts a survey. Plus B R Nanda, K P Unnikrishnan, Hon. Sethna and P N Haksar assess the contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru to this country.

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Cover: M F Husain's painting on Indira Gandhi's assassination photographed by Sunil Dutt, portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru by Subroto Ganguly

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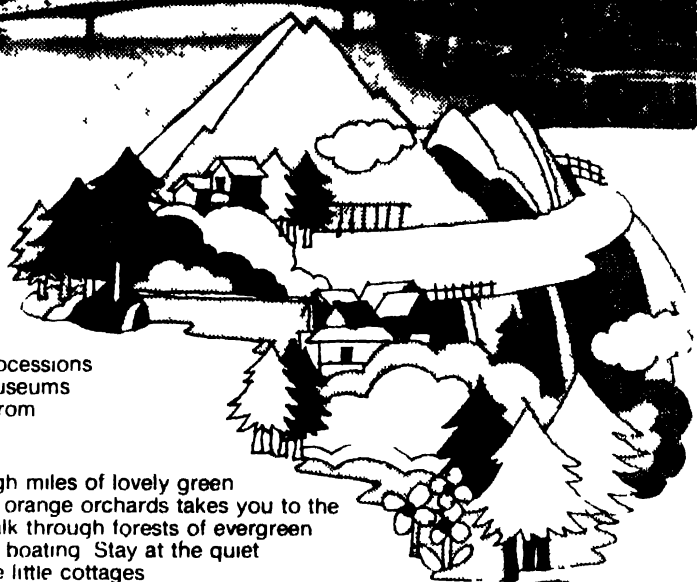
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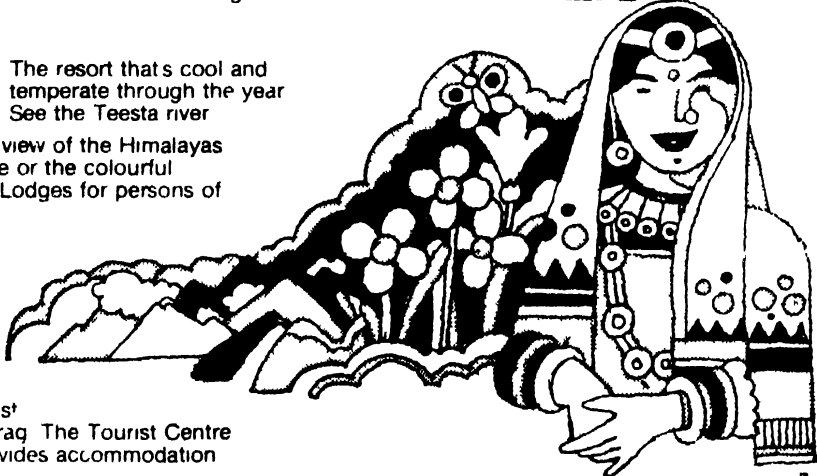
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Government of West Bengal

04/19824R/ISSG

Islamabad: They call this city half as big as the Arlington cemetery and twice as dead. Karachi was the first capital of Pakistan, but it was too commercial and too crowded and perhaps too full of people for the comfort of those who ran Pakistan. Governments do not, as a rule, like to be near too many people: you never know from which side the next siege might come. Crowds are a reminder of problems and tensions except on these few occasions when their cheers surge into the clouds, carrying the leader along. The architects of modern capitals are wise men. They know that adulation comes but once or twice in a lifetime; while each day a crowd can become a mob asking for bread or liberty. Karachi had nothing but crowds. Worse, they would be *mahujir* or Sindhi crowds, and you can't live among the very people you want to exclude from the power structure. The rulers of Pakistan, in particular the uniformed variety, needed the security of a Punjabi hinterland to feel secure. They shifted first to Rawalpindi, comfortably distant from Sind and satisfyingly close to the army headquarters. But even though the accents were right and the complexions were fair in the region of Pathans, there was still a problem: the crowd. You can't build the palaces to match Delhi's in a maze called Rawalpindi. And so the planners went outside the city's limits, to the point where the hills of Murree and Kashmir begin their gracious rise. You appreciate how close you are to the hills when you see one slope up just in front of your hotel window.

The airport for Rawalpindi and Islamabad is the same, but the two cities belong to different worlds. Rawalpindi has evolved from the past; Islamabad has been built for the elite of the present and the future. Rawalpindi has noise, traffic jams, pedestrians, open air restaurants cooking *kebabs*, a jail (where they hanged Bhutto), sweetmeat shops with flies buzzing around the glass-cased display cupboards, cassette shops blaring subcontinental music, markets, buses nudging one another, drivers cursing, fields caked with dust, lanes that twist and turn and spill into courtyards ringed by houses that came up in the first quarter of the century. Islamabad is completely the opposite in every sense. It is the silence that surprises you first, and then the absence of visible people. The avenues are wide and superbly metalled; you get the feeling that the wheels of the enor-

mous variety of international cars would not even be specked. This is a Rolls Royce city: at sixty miles an hour the only sound that you hear is the ticking of the clock. And, yes, the scratching of the bureaucrat's pen, except that no bureaucrat in the world has done anything anywhere at sixty miles an hour. And the palaces are beautiful, no doubt about that. In fact, Islamabad looks like the model-design studio of some fabulous architect with the funds to go on constructing dream after dream. The highlight of the moment is the creation of a marvellous presidential palace (General Zia still lives in Army House in Islamabad, the residence of the chief of the army; once he sheds his uniform, with the eventual going of martial law, he will need another official residence).

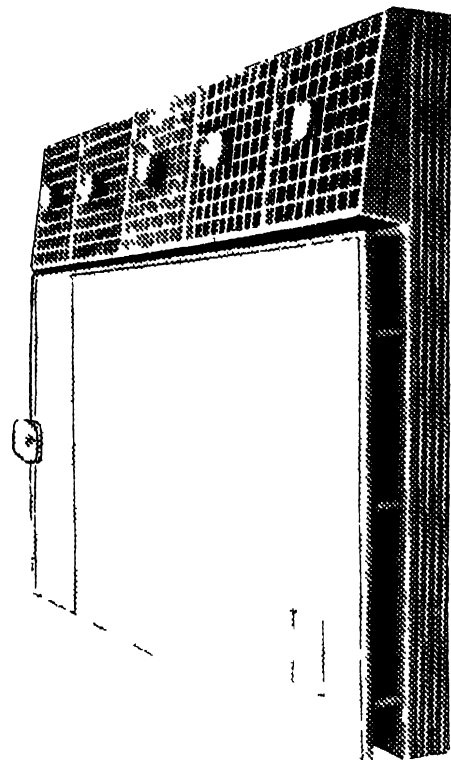
This house is being built on Constitution Avenue, a name which sounds ironic in view of the fact that the Constitution is the one thing which Pakistan has not been able to agree upon (at the moment the 1973 Constitution of Bhutto is being amended and re-amended, while the country is run on the rather less debatable authority of Martial Law). But Islamabad is not really the political capital of Pakistan. It is the bureaucratic capital. Normally, these two functions are combined, as the elected or nominated political leaders mesh and spar with the permanent civil service to create a specific ethos as in Washington or Bonn or New Delhi. But Islamabad still lacks the energy which is injected into an environment by the active politician. A new legislature had just been voted in when I visited the city,

'There are not too many of the world's journalists in Islamabad now, because cemeteries rarely make much news. But if the Prince of Civilian Rule has really kissed our Sleeping Beauty, and everyone is going to wake up, then we are heading for exciting times, not only in Islamabad but in the whole of Pakistan.'

brought into being by a rather curious form of democracy which considered political parties to be intrinsically evil, and individuals much better substitutes. The primary purpose of the partyless election was to ensure that the People's Party did not get anywhere near the legislature, but anyway there were at least elected members in the house rather than the selected yes-men of the Shooraa, the last "voice of the people." In theory, this select band of elected individuals was meant to debate and exercise their vote by the highest principles—pure nonpartisan interest and the greatest good of the nation. There was to be nothing like a government and an opposition in the house, though a government headed by a Prime Minister had been formed and had to legitimise its assumption of power by a 'yes' vote in the house. The Prime Minister, on paper, was the chief executive of the country, while President Zia, very much on paper again, was now just the head of state—but not quite without teeth, since martial law was still in force.

Very quickly it became clear that a Henry the Second/Thomas Beckett situation could easily build up between the President and even this sponsored parliament. To begin with, Prime Minister Junejo began insisting that martial law was inconsistent with a parliamentary system; in other words, it should be lifted and true authority should be given to him. President Zia replied with the correct noises, but he was more aware of the pitfalls of an environment freed of martial law than his new colleagues in power were. The day martial law went, the streets would be drowned with demonstrators. And then? The second instance of political tension in Islamabad came when the legislature defeated President Zia's candidate for Speaker, thanks partly to the initiative taken by an old-boys'-network (an equivalent of Doon School has about 40 MPs). It was the kind of thing which became the staple of conversations around the country.

If this is only the beginning, we might well have to change the description of Islamabad. There are not too many of the world's journalists in Islamabad now, because cemeteries rarely make much news. But if the Prince of Civilian Rule has really kissed our Sleeping Beauty, and everyone is going to wake up, then we are heading for exciting times, not only in Islamabad but in the whole of Pakistan.



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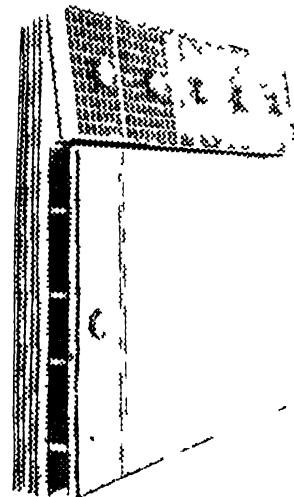
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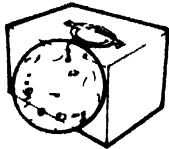


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Muslims Suffered Most

Not many people know that 60 Muslims were killed nearly 200 injured and 1 000 families uprooted in Ahmedabad during the recent agitation against reservations. I have found out the reason for the first outburst on 18 March—the government instigated a communal riot in an attempt to divert attention from the agitation on the reservation issue. But I could not find out who started the second riot on 22 April when the police went on the rampage. Subsequent riots have been a sequel to earlier ones.

I am at a loss to understand why the national press has failed to highlight the suffering of the Ahmedabad Muslims. True the dimensions of the anti reservation agitation were larger. But the fact remains that it was the Muslims who suffered the most—and for no fault of theirs. All quarters admit that Hindus and Muslims had been living in amity since the 1969 riot and in the recent incidents there are several instances of women and children of one community being given shelter and protection by the other. An outstanding example is that of a Hindu boy who rushed to hospital on his motorcycle, a Muslim girl he found lying in a pool of blood on the road after being stabbed.

Many Muslims whom I met in Ahmedabad asked me why very few newspapers reported the communal riots and almost no newspaper in the country gave details of the looting and killing. While much was made of the murder of a head constable, they said 'no local newspaper carried a single word about the Muslims' fate. They gave me a copy of a handbill in Gujarati which said: 'The recent events in the city have led every Hindu to think whether the Hindus are safe in India, Muslims have shown their true colours.'

My feeling is that there are now militant sections in all communities ready to settle scores with each other whenever there is a breakdown in the law and order machinery. And this sort of militancy seems to have gained ground especially among the Hindus in recent times. Usually allied to these militants are anti-social elements and the politicians behind them—as was evident during the November riots in Delhi. The leaders of these sections also try to use economic arguments to instil fear and suspicion in the minds of people and prepare their followers to start a riot at the least provocation. It happened in Bhilwandi, Moradabad, Meerut and Ahmedabad. One common fear in the minds of Hindus is that the Muslim population for whom family planning is a taboo and whose men have the freedom to have four wives, will one day outnumber them. This is a figment of the imagination but Hindus, by and large, believe it. And the fact that Muslims in India are opposed to any proposal to make mono-

gamy compulsory which Pakistan and some Islamic countries have done, only adds to the fear.

Many Hindus have, of late, shown chauvinistic tendencies. Thanks to certain Congress(I) leaders, the appeal and motivation of secularism has lessened. The fact that the Muslims no longer vote for the Congress(I) *en bloc* has made some in the party adopt methods or make statements that have encouraged communalism.

I am not suggesting that the Hindus alone are afflicted by communalism or there has been a secular awakening among Muslims. But the responsibility of wooing the minorities and giving them a feeling of security rests on the shoulders of the Hindus—the majority—who constitute 80 per cent of the country's population. Here is how a top police officer, a Hindu, analysed the causes of communalism. The communally minded politicians and the preachers have in reality never let the gullible common citizen alone, whether he be a Hindu or a Muslim. Seeds of distrust have been planted in the minds of the Muslims while the Hindus have been told that they are unjustly coerced into making extraordinary concessions to the Muslims in economic, social and cultural fields. Exploiting the deep religious traditions of both the communities, differences in their respective practices and rituals are highlighted and often it is shown that the one is out to destroy the other.

Communalism is wholly out of place in the modern world and is essentially opposed to the concept of nationalism. We must look at the problem in the larger context. Much of the insecurity and fear in the country is due to social backwardness. Economic development is one way out. But that will take time. What the Hindus should realise is that secularism is not only a modern concept but is a necessary one to keep India, with its many religions, united and democratic.

The Sikh extremists who struck in north India the other day have tried to harm India's integrity as much as Hindu and Muslim separatists are harming the nation. The answer is a concerted attack on all types of communalism without compromise. And if ever India were to be a Hindu state—which God forbid—she would disintegrate, because the Hindus have neither the Pope, nor the church. The strong point of its religion is its catholicity that strings together people of different creeds. Discipline or uniformity will break it.

Coming back to the question of the Muslims in Ahmedabad, I think that all those who have suffered should be compensated. It was good to see the Sikhs affected by the riots being rehabilitated in Delhi. Ahmedabad's Muslim victims, too, should be rehabilitated.

Communalism is wholly out of place in the modern world and is essentially opposed to the concept of nationalism... Much of the insecurity and fear in the country is due to social backwardness. Economic development is one way out. But that will take time.

Enemies of the People

I was shocked by the report *Police vs People* (5.11 May). By resorting to cruel methods to eliminate crime the police are harming society more than helping it. The Ahmedabad police commissioner B K Jha's claim that there was no breakdown of law and order in the city was a blatant lie. Even the CM Madhavsinh Solanki refused to admit the truth. *Bibek Sen New Delhi*

• Ever since independence, almost every arm of the government has become totally politicised. As a result, the police have become corrupt, inept, incompetent and demoralised. There are of course reasons for the malaise: not only do policemen live in slums with criminals as neighbours but they are also frequently transferred and humiliated and never properly trained. Unless the police machinery is revamped, our democracy will be converted into a police state. *Prabodh Govind New Delhi*

• The Gujarat riots have proved that the Congress (I) ministry headed by Mr Solanki is incapable of administering the state. The trouble could have been avoided if the government had come to a compromise with the agitators. *A Shankar Calcutta*

• The Gujarat agitation triggered off a chain reaction with a communal riot, police revolt and caste war erupting in succession. Had the riot spread all over the country, our entire administrative machinery would have collapsed. We must all be on the guard against the mischief makers. *Prahlad Ghosh Calcutta*

• The whole issue of the uplift of the downtrodden has been tackled the wrong way. There is no reason why after 35 years of independence the problem should still remain unsolved. In fact it has become even more intractable. It is preposterous to expect 80 per cent seat in elite colleges and jobs reserved for a particular community—the privileged class of India today, throwing all criteria of basic qualifications and merit to the wind. The only way to judge the underprivileged is their economic merits, not the religion or caste. *Vijaydevi New Delhi*

• It was a pity that Gujarat



has a home minister as well as a 'super home minister' Shubhabrata Bhattacharya rightly pointed out that "a chief minister who is insensitive to the people's hurt feelings and protects those who perpetrate the law of the jungle must go". It is unfortunate that a war between the police and the people should be fought in a state which gave Mahatma Gandhi to the nation. *V N Narayanaswamy, Madras*

• Time and again, the police force has proved unequal to the duties and services for which it is being primarily maintained. And the fault is not entirely its own. The manner in which it is maintained and managed is, to say the least, inept. The message of Ahmedabad cannot be disregarded any longer: reform the police or pay the price of neglect. *Roshan Lall Meerut*

• It is the misfortune of the people of Gujarat that they have a chief minister who instead of protecting them remains a mute witness to police atrocities on the public. When the Prime Minister was talking of the purity of the Congress at the party's centenary session in New Delhi, he forgot about the atrocities that were being perpetrated in Gujarat where the Congress(I) is in power. Mr Solanki has been trying to ignore the main issues, hoping that the agitation will not last; it is an old Congress ploy—let the situation worsen till it gets out of control, and then one can give it a communal tinge. Mr Solanki is clearly trying to create a situation like Punjab and Assam in his state. *S C Malakar Agra*

People Matter

Congratulations to Tariq Abdullah for his confession to Yusuf Jameel, 'G M Shah has been Reduced to a Minority in the Assembly' (28 April—4 May). The final arbiters of power in a democracy, after all, are the people. It was "we the people" who should decide who should be entrusted with power. Democracy must give primacy to the will of the majority if this is to be done the present government under G M Shah should be dismissed in order to give the people an opportunity to elect a government of their choice. The masses of Jammu and Kashmir have already expressed full confidence in Dr Farooq Abdullah in the recent Lok Sabha polls. *Bijoy Kumar Dutta Jammu*

Warrior With Plough

In *The Beginning of the End?* (7.11 May) Sarada P Nanda discussed the political situation in Orissa and dragged the name of a particular community, the khandayats, into the political arena. Around 50 per cent of the population of Orissa belongs to the khandayat caste also called kshatriya, agharia, pradhan, paik, odiva, kulita and dalua in different regions. Most of the members of the Orissa legislative assembly belong to the same caste. The etymological meaning of khandayats is warriors who control the sword. During the reign of the Maharaja of Puri Gajapati, members of this caste were mainly engaged in the military force of the state. Today, since Orissa is a largely agricultural state, 90 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture irrespective of caste or creed. Thus, castes today can no longer be identified according to their occupations.

Manmath N Baral Kendrapara

Bitter Memories

Any right thinking person would agree with the views of opposition leaders to whom SUNDAY put the question *What Should the Akalis Do Now?* (28 April 4 May). History has not forgotten the mahants who honoured General Dyer in the Golden Temple as a defender of the Sikh faith and presented him a saropa (honour) after he carried out the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre. *S Jayaram, Coimbatore*

Wrong, Mr Paul

Swraj Paul (*Opinion*, 28 April May 4) presumes that SUNDAY's readers have to 'suffer' the writings of Khushwant Singh and Kuldip Nayar. This is just not true. We love reading them while Mr Singh's gossip is a treat. Mr Nayar's facts are always revealing. And justifiably enough you begin with them even before the letters pages which most magazines put first to flatter their readers. But what surprises me is how people can take men like Mr Paul seriously. He tried to sabotage Indian industry and got a lot of free publicity in the Indian media which he does not deserve.

Arun Khaitan, Deoria, Uttar Pradesh



Swraj Paul

- Mr Paul's letter paints a pathetic picture of this defeated 'saviour of Escorts and DCM'. It shows how he has passed into oblivion without the publicity he enjoyed in the press.

earlier, thanks to his 'Indira connections'. Now he is desperately trying to get back in the news by maligning journalists of repute like Khushwant Singh, Kuldip Nayar and even M J Akbar, who were instrumental in exposing him.

I J Khosla, Calcutta

Spirited Defence

Kuldip Nayar was right in his *Defence of Gandhi* (Exclusive 5-11 May). After having destabilised all democratic institutions, the Congress has now started a sinister campaign against the country's first citizen. While they blame all and sundry for their failures, they lionise their own hoodlums. It is not surprising that no action has been taken against the Congressman who made the indiscreet remarks against the President. Mr Nayar rightly said that

whatever his shortcomings, Gandhi has conducted himself very well.

P Govind, New Delhi

- I was perturbed to know that the Congress(I) MP, K K Tiwari, has levelled serious charges against the man who holds the nation's highest office. One must not forget that Gandhi has proved himself to be secular, inviting the wrath of his own community.

Rajvir Grewal, Calcutta

Mohallas are Safe

I agree with Khushwant Singh's (*Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 5-11 May). A man who has been a victim of caste conflicts and communal riots would naturally want to live among members of his own community as he is psychologically convinced that violence can break out anywhere at any time. Not surprisingly, in every town in our secular country there is a Brahman tola, a Rajputgarh, a Jat nagar, a Harijan tola and Mianbad.

Md Anwar Alam Qumaispuri, Patna

- In his item on the 'Wife seeker' (14-20 April) Mr Singh has tried to denigrate the Hindu religion. It was blasphemous of him to have said that Ram Chandraj advised a person who had lost his wife to ask for Hanumanji's help in recovering her. Mr Singh ought to know that Ram Chandraj

was no less than a god and that Hanumanji went to Lanka to look after Sitaji on Ram Chandraj's orders, and not on his own.

Sanjay Chopra, Ludhiana

- I doubt whether Mr Singh (20-26 April) knows that circumcision was practised by the nomadic tribes of Arabia and Persia centuries before the birth of Islam. The tribes which were converted to Islam, brought their age-old customs into the religion. The Muslims have only absorbed the continuing traditions of the Jews and other nomadic tribes.

MR Prasad Nagpur

- So even Khushwant Singh manages to misquote Iqbal! The first line of the couplet quoted by him in his column (28 April-4 May) should

Who's Their God?

Mr Nayar's argument in *The Tragedy of Pakistan's Ahmedias* (Exclusive 31 March-6 April) is fallacious. The Ahmedias should be asked whether they accept the 'finality' which Mr Nayar ascribes them. If they do, who or what is Ghulam Ahmed Qadriani? Can there be any person more final after accepting the finality of Mohammed? Can there be any figure rounder than a circle? The country which is 'claiming to be Islamic' is only exposing the Ahmedias' lack of reasoning. And this country is not alone in being strict with the Ahmedias. No member of this group is permitted to perform Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca) because he does not acknowledge the finality of Prophet Mohammed.

Sikander Tootiq, Hyderabad

Goodbye, Kishore

Congratulations for the article on Kishore Kumar (*The Entertainer Bows Out* 5-11 May). I had heard about his departure from the Hindi film industry with disbelief. I wonder why he decided to quit when he still has such a large following. His exit will leave a void in the world of music and it will be a great loss for the industry. But the industry will gain in one way: the number of third grade movies and actors who have all along been surviving on Kishore's voice will go down.

B Ganesh, Jamshedpur

Read: *Jahan mein ahl-e iman soorat khursheed peetay hain*. Although the misquotation does not damage the content much, the form is severely tarnished.

A H Khan, Azamgarh

- The most significant contribution SUNDAY can make to national integration and communal harmony is to do away with Mr Singh's column. His derogatory piece on Tamils exposes his ignorance of the state and his inability to look beyond the obvious. "Tamils," he says, "are utterly irrational in their addiction to caste, superstition and ritual." Agreed. But if the Tamils are more united than many other communities, it also shows them to be much more tolerant.

K Seshasavee, Bombay

A Missing Assassin?

Even six months after Mrs Indira Gandhi was shot dead, too many questions remain unanswered about one of the most carefully executed assassinations in recent memory. And the most persistent question has been about the possibility of a third killer apart from Beant Singh, who was gunned down within minutes of the assassination, and Satwant Singh, the prime accused in the case who is now in Tihar Jail. For one thing, initial news flashes on the incident had mentioned "three assassins." Besides, the post mortem and site reports, recent arrests and a statement by Satwant Singh show that this may, after all, be true. RITU SARIN investigates



Indira Gandhi's body lying in state in Teen Murti Bhavan : unanswered questions about her assassination

Sandeep Shrivastava

Have all the people involved in the murder of Mrs Indira Gandhi been arrested? The possibility of there being a missing assassin has been looming large from the day Mrs Gandhi was gunned down. To begin with, the initial news agency reports on the fateful day repeatedly mentioned three assassins. By the evening, the number was reduced to two, with Beant Singh, who had been shot dead and Satwant Singh, who had been injured, being named. The post mortem report too suggests the possibility of there having been another assassin. The statement made by the prime accused Satwant Singh, in early May when he retracted his confessional statement also suggests the possibility of a missing assassin. Apart from Satwant Singh's statement some other recent developments have given rise to this speculation. The arrests of Dalip Singh and Rajinder Singh under the National Security Act (NSA) have opened up the question. The investigation in the murder case being undertaken by the special investigating team set up under S Anandram, former director general of the Central Industrial Security Force, have been shrouded in a veil of secrecy. The Thakkar Commission, which is enquiring into the murder (in addition to the case, which is since 13 May 1985, in the sessions court) is about to complete its term without having made much headway. It is going to get a fresh lease of life.

On 6 May 1985 Satwant Singh, the 22 year old prime accused, filed an application alleging that the confession he had made inside Tihar Central Jail on 1 December 1984 was a "forged document." In the confession (recorded under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedures Code), Satwant Singh had admitted his guilt. "I cocked the sten gun and fired on the left part of the Prime Minister's body. I had loaded 20 bullets in the sten gun, I emptied all of them on the Prime Minister. Some hit the Prime Minister, others hit the road. The Prime Minister fell after the first bullet hit her." These words of Satwant Singh would have provided the basis of the argument against him. He has now claimed that the confession had never been recorded at all. He concludes his retraction with the words "I deny having made any statement on 1 December 1984 under Section 164 of the Cr PC, before the magistrate and for that matter before Shri Bharat Bhushan, the learned additional chief metropolitan magistrate, New Delhi. If such statement bears my signatures, I re-



A rare photograph of Satwant Singh

fraternise having voluntarily put such signatures." In the statement, Satwant also says his alleged "confession" was recorded on an application which bears no date.

However, the most crucial aspect of Satwant Singh's plea is not his allegation about his confession being

forged, but another statement that he makes. Para 16 of the statement says "It is now clear that Mrs Indira Gandhi's murder has not been properly investigated deliberately. It is also clear that the prosecution is making all out attempts to keep under cover the identity of the person who masterminded it." And in its anxiety to hide the true facts and to suppress truth, the prosecution has fabricated among other things the so called confessional statement u/s 164 CrPC attributed to me." Then comes the sudden admission "The bullets came from many directions. But the prosecution does not look into other directions. I am surprised." In para 18 Satwant further says "The name of the white skinned (goras) present who were walking behind Mrs Indira Gandhi are not mentioned. Other names are included who were not there in the immediate vicinity. This is pure padding both ways."

Who were these goras referred to by Satwant Singh? And how did the bullets come from "many directions"? Earlier, when he had been admitted at the Ram Manohar Lohia



A file photograph of Beant Singh (behind the late PM) escorting Mrs Gandhi in Bangalore

COVER STORY

Hospital where he was being treated for bullet injuries, Satwant Singh had told his interrogators that there had been a third, clean shaven accomplice, who had joined them in the shooting. Was he talking about the third assassin? Was the third man being referred to by Satwant Singh Sukhdev Singh, also from the Prime Minister's security staff who was arrested shortly afterwards?

The question of the missing assassin has risen time and again. Yet no one has authoritatively affirmed or denied the possibility of a third assassin. It is important that in the first reports on the assassination circulated by the national news agencies—PTI and UNI—there were three assassins mentioned: two Sikhs in uniform and another clean shaven Sikh in civilian clothes. One news agency quoted an eyewitness account given by Vasanti, a Seva Dal worker, who was present on the spot. Vasanti's account had been that the late Prime Minister was killed by the

two Sikh security guards who opened fire in response to the "namaste" of the Prime Minister, while a third stood watching. On the day of the assassination, till late in the evening, press reports repeated that there had been three men who had been involved. One report said that two of the assassins were shot down by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) commandos while another (Satwant Singh) was critically wounded. Another report said that the three assassins were shot while trying to escape.

There were other pointers in favour of the view that Beant Singh and Satwant Singh had a third accomplice. Assistant sub-inspector Rameshwar Daal, Mrs Gandhi's special security officer (who is listed No 3 in the list of 144 witnesses) was the fourth person who received bullet injuries. Rameshwar Daal was also treated for his wounds at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences

(AIIMS) for three bullet injuries he had received on his thighs. Interestingly, the casualty or MLC report No 60308 gives the time of injury as 8 55 am. Mrs Gandhi was, in fact, shot at 9 08 am. How is it when only Satwant and Beant were firing, and both aiming their guns at Mrs Gandhi, Rameshwar Daal also received bullet injuries? Beant Singh fired five rounds at the late Prime Minister with his service revolver (No J 296754, butt No 140). Satwant followed his direction and emptied 25 machine carbine bullets at the already bleeding Prime Minister (using SAF carbine No WW 13980 FT, positioned at rapid fire). There was little possibility for Satwant to have diverted his aim from the Prime Minister to Rameshwar Daal. Besides, if his gun had been pointing down at the wounded figure, how could his bullets have hit the thighs of Rameshwar Daal who was trailing behind? There was an indication that Rameshwar Daal was fired at from behind.

The post mortem report of the late Prime Minister was handed over to the accused persons a few days before the trial commenced. The report was given along with other documentary evidence including the casualty report, the inquest report and the scaled site plan of the spot of the assassination. The documents which are listed as items No 11, 10, 8 and 31 in the list of 90 exhibits should in fact have been delivered with the charge sheet. They were handed over only a few days prior to the trial proceedings.

The post mortem report in the case of death by firearms is essential to determine the distance of the assailant(s), the angle of shots, the entry and exit points of the bullets. It is a fact that when Mrs Gandhi was brought to the AIIMS and declared dead at 4 30 pm (though it is known that she died on the way to hospital), her body was not brought for autopsy to the mortuary in the basement. The post mortem was conducted in the operation theatre on the eighth floor of the AIIMS.

The post-mortem report of Mrs Gandhi (No 1340/84) gives the cause of death as follows: "The cause of death is haemorrhage, shock due to multiple fire arm bullet injuries. The injuries are ante mortem in nature, produced by firearm. The injuries collectively are sufficient to cause death in ordinary course of nature. The injuries No 1 and No 2 are individually sufficient to cause death in ordinary course of nature." There are 50 injuries which are listed in the report. Of these three are ante mor



Satwant Singh's father, Tirluk Singh outside Tihar Central Jail

Sandeep Shankar

COVER STORY

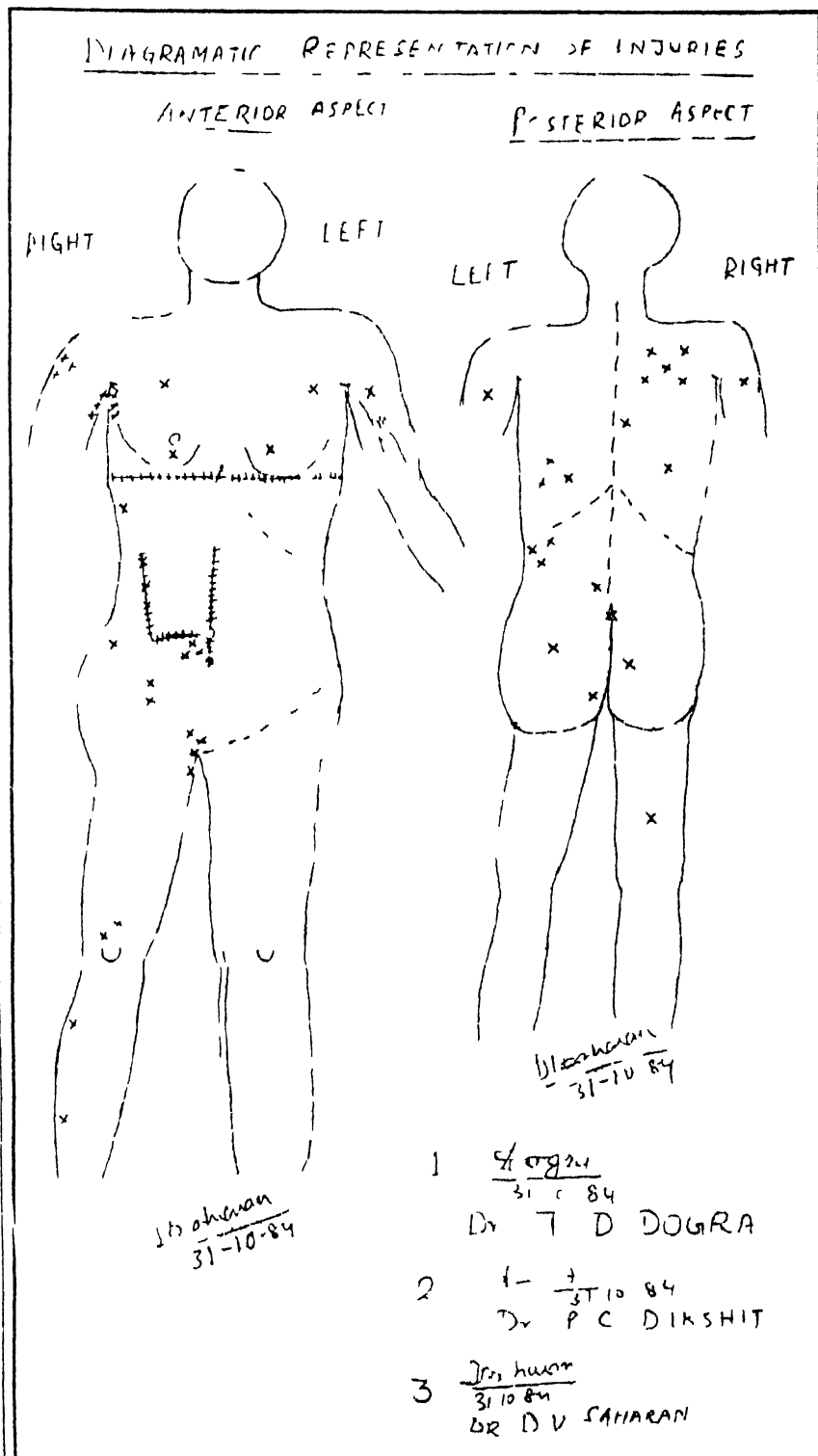
tem, four on the right arm, three on the right axilla, two in the left arm, 15 on the chest, 14 on the abdomen, three on the perineum and six on the lower limb (see *diagrammatic representation of injuries*). The report also makes a special note of the fact that some bullets were left in the body to avoid further mutilation. Besides this, the casualty report of the late Prime Minister (No 60307) records the nature of the injuries as "grievous."

The details of injuries suffered by the late Prime Minister, as given in the post mortem report, are vital for progress of investigations and judicial proceedings of the case. However, a curious development is likely to take place concerning the post mortem report itself. The chief counsel for Satwant Singh, Pran Nath Lekhi, has alleged that the post mortem report is "a false document." Lekhi, a noted criminal lawyer resigned from the vice presidency of the Delhi wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when he took up the case of defending the murderer of the late Prime Minister. Lekhi told SUNDAY "I am going to prove in court that the post mortem report they have given us is a forgery. There was no post mortem conducted on the Prime Minister. This is a document which was prepared by doctors, (who) in my opinion (are) not competent enough to perform post mortems several days after the death. I am willing to be challenged by any one who can prove this is an authentic document." He added that the presence of over 50 wounds in the body, seven of them on the back, is proof that there was one or maybe two more persons who fired at her. "How else do you account for the large number of bullets on the back?" Satwant was firing from the north eastern direction and Beant from the south western, then how have the bullets come from all sides of the compass, criss crossing the victim?" he asks. Besides, he said in his application of 6 May, Satwant has himself said the bullets came from "many directions."

An examination of the detailed plan of the assassination site is important to establish the sequence of events of that morning. The plan, which has been prepared by Balbir Singh, assistant draftsman, crime branch, Delhi police, has visually positioned the persons present on the spot. In the plan, B1-B15 are shown as the spots where 9 mm empty cartridges were found lying, G1-G3 the place where pieces of lead were lying, J1-J8 the place where

bullet marks were found on the cemented road. The plan also indicates the spot where Beant Singh and Satwant Singh were on duty and positions from where Narain Singh, Rameshwar Dayal, R K Dhawan, M L Fotedar and Ramji Lal

witnessed the event. Points on the house—1, Safdarjung Road—where bullets struck, are also marked. The place marked V shows a bullet in the wall at a height of 165 cms from ground level. W shows the bullet mark on the wall at a height of 180



Diagrammatic representation of Indira Gandhi's injuries prepared by doctors of the AIIMS

cms from ground level. Said Lekhi: "If there were only two assassins, as has been declared by the prosecution till now, how did the bullets, which were fired at close range, hit the walls of the house? This is further proof that there was a third and possibly a fourth assassin who were firing from the direction opposite to Satwant and Beant."

S. Anandaram, when contacted, was not willing to disclose whether

there was a third assassin on the spot or not. "If there was a third assassin, as alleged, he will soon be charge-sheeted. We may issue a second and even a third charge-sheet in the case soon," he said. Anandaram was tightlipped about the date when a fresh charge-sheet was likely to be issued, or about the nature of involvement of persons who had been arrested recently. "My case is open for all to see. I have

sufficient evidence against the accused persons which would be placed before the court. There is no need of padding-up or giving false evidence in a case like this. If we suspect more persons of complicity, we will implicate them shortly." He asserted that the large number of bullet-marks on the spot of the assassination could have resulted from the bullets fired at the Prime Minister, having made an exit from her body and ricocheting on the walls.

Other persons contacted in the Anandaram team said that the report of the ballistic team would be presented in the court once after the trial is underway. "The ballistic report will be handed over to the accused persons by the court at such time it feels it is essential. We have sufficient proof of the weapons that were used for the crime and the number of bullets fired at her. Only we will reveal such details later," said one investigating officer. He denied criticism that documentary and circumstantial evidence listed in the charge-sheet had been handed over to the court in bits and pieces to conceal the truth behind the sequence of events and involvement of a larger number of persons than have been named in the charge-sheet. "Whatever evidence has been collected by us has been handed over to the court of the chief metropolitan magistrate. It is upto him to give it to the accused persons and their counsel. But the very sensitive nature of the investigations, and the possibility of the assassination being part of a larger plot, had forced us to keep back some vital clues. We do not want to jeopardise the investigations by disclosing the ramifications of the case even before the trial has begun in earnest," he said.

The second charge-sheet in the assassination may provide answers to the questions that the first, rather disappointing, document left unanswered. Among them was, firstly, the charges against the other persons who have been arrested so far and the possibility of any one of them being the third, unnamed, unidentified assassin. It is not clear, for example, what the connection is between charges faced by Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh and those faced by Jagtar Singh. Jagtar Singh, a commando in Mrs Indira Gandhi's security set-up was arrested on 31 October 1984 and has been in judicial custody since. Jagtar Singh, according to the FIR lodged against him (No 295/85), is charged under the Arms Act for being in

A Slip Too Many

The persons who prepared the documentary evidence required for the judicial proceedings in the Indira Gandhi case did not obviously realise the highly sensitive nature of their assignment. As a result, some shocking mistakes have inadvertently crept into the evidence. most glaring *faux pas* has been committed in the post-mortem report of the late Prime Minister. In the first page of the report the date on which the post mortem report, inquest papers and dead body was handed over to the police is given as 7-11-84. If the bullet-ridden body of the Prime Minister was handed over to the police constable on 7 November, who was cremated on 3 November?

Doctors of the forensic department of the AIIMS who helped in the preparation of the post-mortem report, admit a wrong date has crept into the report by mistake. Usually, they pointed out, the report is handed over to relatives of the deceased the same day. In this case, in all probability the post-mortem report was given to the crime branch on 7 November, the date which has been mentioned. The report of the assassinated Prime Minister was not shown to even the seniormost doctors of the department. That is, perhaps, the reason why the mistake has not been detected as yet. Also, while the age of the late Prime Minister in the post-mortem report is stated to be 67 years in the inquest report, Mrs Gandhi is said to have been 68 years of age. If the two documents are to be believed, then the late Prime Minister aged by an year between the preparation of the two reports. Such errors on the documentary evidence to be placed before court shortly, are going to find the prosecution in a tight spot. Said Anandaram: "The reports have been prepared by the doctors at the AIIMS and the police. We

The post-mortem report. Note the wrong date of handing over the body

had nothing to do with them."

Little care seems to have gone behind the drafting of the site plan of the assassination. Otherwise, at least in this most vital document, mistakes would not have occurred. On scrutiny, it is easy to conclude that the draftsmen of the Crime Branch, Delhi Police are certainly not well versed in the English language. How else does the Crime Branch account for sten-gun to be spelt "stain gun," the accused Beant Singh "Beyant Singh," the sentry booth a "santry booth"? What is worse is that it is the pool of blood of "Smt Indra Gandhi" that is shown at a spot pointed out by the Crime Branch draftsmen.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

E-SPINAL COLUMN

As mentioned

F-MUSCLES BONES

As mentioned

G-ADDITIONAL REMARKS

N/A

1. Items handed over to constable

SEVEN (7) only

1. Post mortem report, inquest papers and dead body handed over to POLICE CONSTABLE

on 7-11-84 at

2. Viscera, clothes and articles, if any

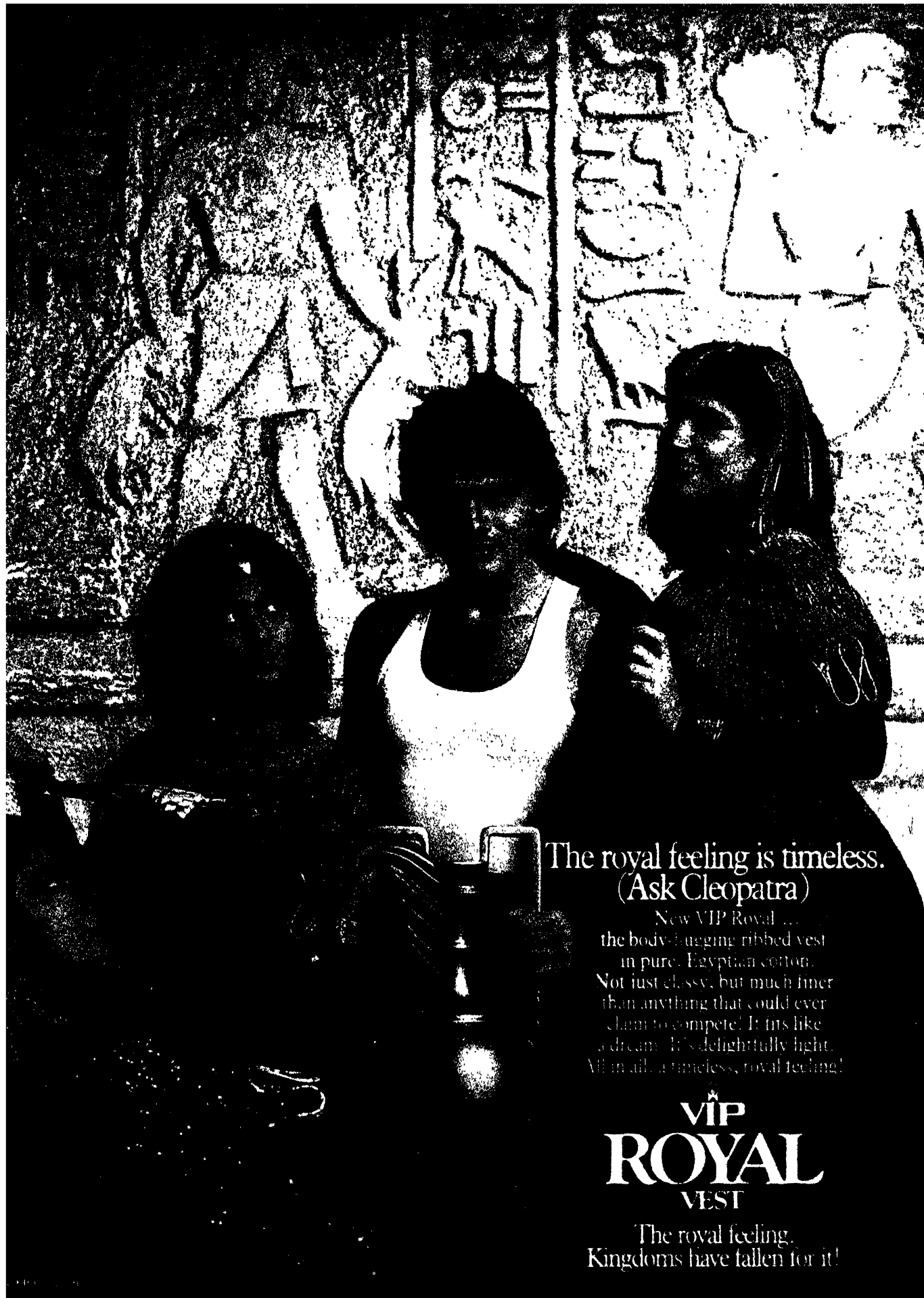
Inspector S. R. P. K. Chahal

(a) P.C. Name

No P.S. Delhi

Signature

(b) P.C. Name



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VIP
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The royal feeling.
Kingdoms have fallen for it!

COVER STORY

possession of a 9 mm cartridge. The cartridge was discovered from the quarters of Jagtar Singh which he shared with Satwant Singh. It is still not known whether Jagtar Singh was present on the spot at the time of the shootout or not. Till date Jagtar Singh has not been named as an accused. The name of sub-inspector Amarjit Singh, again posted at the Prime Minister's house for security duty, was mentioned by Satwant Singh in early December 1984 as a co-conspirator in the assassination. The role that Amarjit Singh had to play in the plot to kill the Prime Minister has also not been revealed till now.

On 2 May Dalip Singh, a grade II examiner in the Reserve Bank of India, was picked up from the Reserve Bank Colony in South Delhi. Dalip Singh, a resident of R K Puram, was one of the persons whose name was linked when the first investigations were being done. According to intelligence report Dalip Singh with other suspects Varinder Singh and Arinder Pal Singh, used to meet at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib and discuss the modus

operandi of the assassination. Dalip Singh, who is listed as one of the prosecution witnesses, was arrested under the National Security Act (NSA) on 2 May 1984. His son, Rajinder Singh, son of accused Kehar Singh, was arrested under the NSA. Rajinder Singh, who was an assistant in the law ministry, had been transferred to Bombay in early November but he (Rajinder Singh) was attending the committal proceedings inside Tihar Jail and was closely linked with the family of both Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. He was picked up a few days after the wife of Beant Singh, Bimla Khalsa, filed a petition charging the two IBP commandos with the murder of her husband. If Dalip Singh and Rajinder Singh had been suspected by the prosecution for complicity in the case, why were the arrests made more than six months after the assassination? The investigating teams are clearly nowhere near the conclusion and they are now working on new lines.

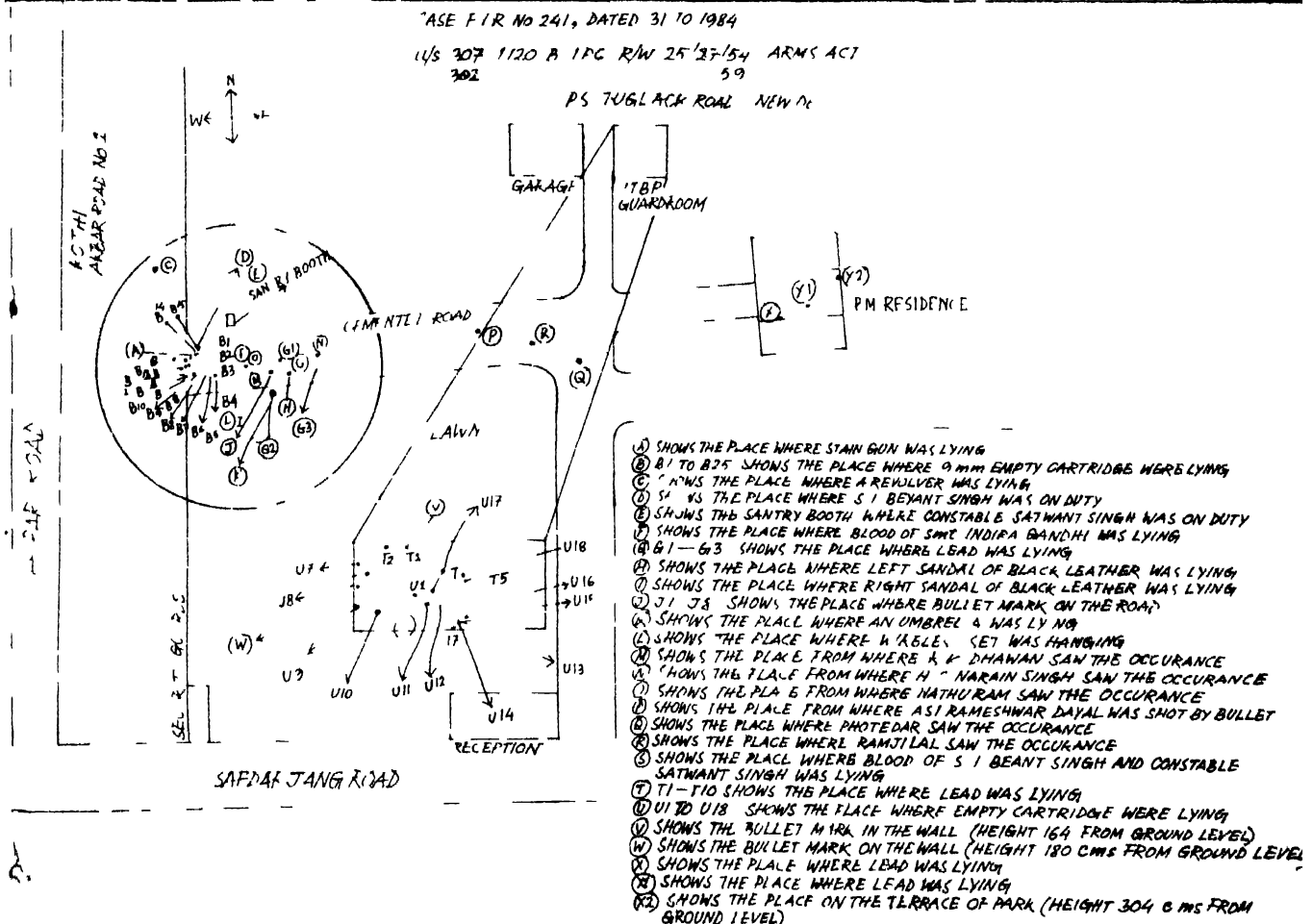
Sources in the investigating team say that the sleuths working on the case are likely to make more arrests

and are busy 'collecting concrete evidence' against the suspects before taking them into custody. The sources also said that the team was looking 'very closely' into the subject of a third assailant being involved in the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The charges being faced by Simranjit Singh Mann, a former IPS officer detained under NSA since 29 November at the Bharatpur jail, Jasbir Singh, nephew of late Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and Harinder Singh, India's former charge-d'affaires in Oslo, are being looked into by the Thakkar Commission.

The delay in the proceedings of the Indira Gandhi murder case has met with strong criticism. Said K K Luthra, a Supreme Court criminal lawyer: "There has been no proper investigation into Mrs. Gandhi murder. The prosecution has a case of a premeditated, well-planned, cold-blooded murder. Why is the prosecution taking so much time?" Another lawyer, R P Kathuria, felt

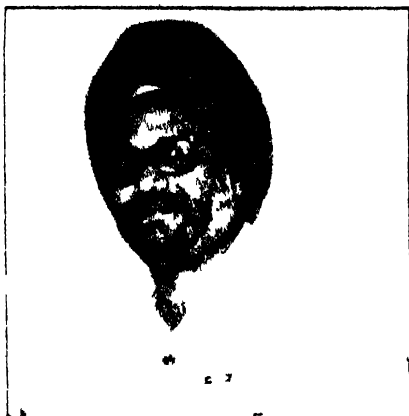
The prosecution has sufficient evidence against the accused persons. Still there has been crucial delay in

Site plan of T. Safdarjung Road prepared by the crime branch, Delhi police. All details of the drawing have been retained for authenticity.



the investigations. If there is a third assassin, then why is his name not disclosed? Some lapses have already taken place which though will not affect the outcome, will give the defendants an opportunity for prolonged cross-examination."

The government and the investigating teams, by not disclosing the full sequence of events are only keeping alive the speculation about the case. Already, on the first day of the trial, there was disappointment in store for all those who were waiting for the legal proceedings to begin. The large posse of Indian and foreign mediamen who waited outside the Tihar Central Jail for the



Kehar Singh

sessions proceedings to commence, had to return disappointed as the additional district and sessions judge, Mahesh Chandra, and the state prosecutor, K.L. Arora, did not turn up. Even the Tihar Jail superintendent, A.B. Shukla, was not aware when the trial would begin. A makeshift courtroom had been prepared for the trial. The counsel for the accused had already asserted that they would not permit the trial to be held *in camera*. Said Rajinder Singh Sodhi, junior counsel of Satwant: "There is no provision in law whereby a single trial can be held *in camera*." (The only other *in camera* trial held in Tihar Jail was that of

'An Attempt Was Made on My Life'

Satwant Singh's confessional statement made on 6 May 1985

"My alleged confession is said to have been recorded inside the Tihar Jail premises, where I am presently lodged. The alleged confession is supposed to have been recorded on 1 December 1984 on an application which bears no date. It will further establish that the so-called confession is a forgery.

"I was ever since my arrest in the morning of 31st October 1984, either kept in hospitals, where I was hanging between life and death, or subjected to severe physical as well as psychological third degree by the police.

"An attempt was made on my life. I was fired at from close range with sten-guns. The agony and the pain to which I was subjected are still troubling me physically as well as mentally. One bullet, in part embedded near my spine is still causing me distress and discomfort. The area around the embedded bullet is in pain. I cannot see the area but I am told it is turning black. My left leg limps.

"On my entry to Tihar Central jail I was examined by the medical officer of the jail. I was examined only, repeat, only once. At that time I was made to sign some papers as was required. My thumb impressions were also taken during my examination. I am surprised to find that Shri Bharat Bhushan has stated he got me medically examined by the medical officer of Tihar Jail and the MO certified that I was fit to make the statement.

"I respectfully submit that the so-called confession said to have

been made by me, is in reality a self-serving document prepared by the prosecution. I made no confession... I am surprised that this so-called confession found a place in the national as well as the international press much before it was supplied to me.. this makes it clear that the so-called confession was prepared by the prosecution for the dual purpose of publicity and to prejudice mankind in my defence.

"I am told in one of the interviews to the press given by Mr Rajiv Gandhi (SUNDAY 10-16 March), he is on record saying that he was suspicious of the 'sardars' on security duty, implying thereby he was suspicious of me. I was seldom around Mr Gandhi but according to him, I used to cock the sten-gun whenever he passed by my side. I am surprised he never complained of this fact to anybody earlier than 31 October 1984. I recall this fact to say that all round foul atmosphere was being created by the prosecution to prevent a fair trial and one of the many foul tactics is the fabrication of this confession.

"It is now clear that Mrs Gandhi's murder has not been properly investigated deliberately. It is also clear that the prosecution is making all out efforts to keep under cover the identity of the person who masterminded it. And in its anxiety, to hide the true facts and to suppress truth the prosecution has fabricated among other things the so-called confession.

"Mrs Sonia Gandhi's name is not included in the list of witnesses

whereas she appeared on the spot. Her presence was first kept concealed. The prosecution has on purpose not examined many facts of the case. It seems to rely on forgery.

"Despite repeated requests, neither the injury, nor the inquest nor the post mortem report of Beant Singh, deceased has been supplied. Probably they do not exist. My injury report has also not been supplied to me.

"I have not made a confessional statement. I did not apply to any magistrate to make a confessional statement. I did not request any police officer to apply for me to the magistrate under Section 164 CrPc. I would have asked the counsels, then provided by the state to me to appoint on my behalf, under section 164 of the CrPc if I wanted to confess.

"If the so-called confession bears my signatures, as I was forced to sign so many blank/written papers when I was suffering a spell of acute mental upset on account of distress, torture, worry and strain. I deny having made any statement on 1 December 1984 u/s 164 CrPc before the magistrate and for that matter before Shri Bharat Bhushan, the learned additional chief metropolitan magistrate, New Delhi. If any such statement bears my signatures, I repudiate having voluntarily put such signatures."

Sd/Satwant Singh
Tihar Central Jail
6.5.85

Why Was the Most Vital Clue Wiped Out?

Under what circumstances were the two assassins, sub-inspector Beant Singh and constable Satwant Singh fired at by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) commandos after the shoot-out at 1, Safdarjung Road? The answer to this question seems to be more important for the investigating teams than the details of the assassination itself. This is perhaps the reason why in the site plan handed over to the accused persons, the inside of the guardroom of the commandos has been shown in a larger scale than the actual spot of the assassination. Nevertheless, the drawing throws light on the sequence of events following the assassination in which the two assassins were shot, one of whom (Beant Singh) succumbed to his injuries in the ambulance which took him to the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (which should have carried the Prime Minister instead) and the other (Satwant Singh) was critically wounded.

By all accounts, after firing at the Prime Minister, the two Sikh security guards threw up their hands in surrender. With their hands in the air the two men were taken inside the ITBP guardroom, close to the garage of the house. The statement of one of the ITBP commandos, Tarsem Singh Jamwal, describes this. Says Jamwal: "The two were

made to sit on two chairs inside. Suddenly he (Beant) jumped from his chair and got hold of my sten-gun (carbine). Constable Satwant Singh also moved at the same time. In the scuffle that ensued, there was firing from my carbine... Ram Saran who came from behind at that moment, also fired on the assailants to prevent them from snatching my (Jamwal's) weapon."

The site plan prepared by the crime branch instead of pointing out where the slain body of the Prime Minister was laid, has spotted the pool of her blood. Similarly, in the enlarged drawing of the guardroom the spot where the blood of Satwant and Beant was found has been marked and not the spot where the two assailants themselves fell after they were attacked. The spots where lead pieces from the carbines of the commandos was lying are also shown in the diagram.

It has been submitted by the wife of Beant Singh, Bimla Khalsa, that the two ITBP commandos should be charged with the murder of Beant Singh. "Sub-inspector Beant Singh was murdered in the same transaction in which Smt Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, was murdered." She has alleged and charged Ram Saran and Tarsem Singh Jamwal with the murder of her husband. The investi-

gating agencies have been conspicuously silent on this aspect of the case. The application of Beant Singh's wife was turned down by the Delhi High Court recently. Also, the reports of the forensic and ballistic teams have not been handed over to either the family of the deceased accused or the surviving accused. In a set of photographs seen by this correspondent, Beant Singh is shown lying, stripped above the waist, with a bandage covering multiple bullet-injuries on his abdomen. His turban lies open in a large pool of blood. The ballistic report of the deceased assassin, is believed to have sufficient evidence that Beant Singh died because of firearm injuries in the shoot-out that followed the assassination. Why is it then that the investigators have not taken any action against the erring commandos who either in the heat of the moment, or under grave provocation, wiped out the most vital clue in the assassination plot? Either way, there was no justification for them to have fired at point-blank range at the two. Their actions nearly wiped out the second assassin as well. Had Satwant Singh not survived, the sequence of events, as will be revealed in the trial, would never have surfaced.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

Ranjit Singh, accused in the murder of the Nirankari Baba. On 26 February this year, a High Court order shifted the trial from the Tihar Central Jail to the Patiala House Courts.) According to Lekhi, if the trial is held *in camera*, they would boycott it. "What is the need for the government to shroud the proceedings in a veil of secrecy? If it is not a public trial, they (the prosecution) will have to drag Satwant into the courtroom."

The battlelines for the Indira Gandhi murder case have been drawn. Satwant Singh, the prime accused is the most important cog in the wheel which has been set in motion with the beginning of the Indira Gandhi assassination trial. According to Satwant's father, Tirlok Singh who met him recently in jail, Satwant is showing signs of strain due to interroga-



Additional sessions judge Mahesh Chandra

tion. The bullet lodged in his spine is restricting his movements and he has recently started showing signs of paralysis. According to Lekhi: "Satwant may have fired at the Prime Minister, but not with an intention to kill. Every killer is not a murderer. I will prove before the law that Satwant injured the Prime Minister, without an intention to kill. He will be charged under Section 307 of the IPC (punishable with life imprisonment) and not Section 302 of the IPC (punishable with death sentence)." On the other hand, says S. Anandaram: "I have enough evidence to prove that Satwant had the intention to kill Mrs Gandhi and he killed her. The outcome of the case is a foregone conclusion."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

'Pakistan is a Creation of Hatred'

M.J. Akbar talks to G.M. Sayed

GM Sayed was one of those who created Pakistan. After having won the 1937 elections on the unity ticket, he along with his mentor Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon, led the shift of Muslim legislators to the Muslim League (which had fared miserably in the 1937 polls). The League, which was non-existent in Sind even till the end of the Thirties, was created not through a popular movement but through this defection of legislators. (The provocation came when the Hindu legislators in order to protect their economic interests would not agree to the passing of a Land Alienation Bill on the lines passed by the Unionist ministry of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan in Punjab—where too the Muslim League had been demolished and the secular Unionist Party had got the overwhelming majority of the Muslim and Hindu legislators.)

After the truck came, the search for flesh. And this flesh was sought to be created as a Muslim League. It was a splendid thing, the propaganda that only the League could protect the interests of the Muslims, and though a parallel which was more or less the same, the provocation of communal riot and riot. It was Sayed who became the president of the Sind Muslim League in 1932 and the death of Sir Abdullah Haroon and from that crucial point he saw and partly conducted the whole operation which created Pakistan. It was only later that G.M. Sayed got disillusioned with Pakistan and for the last three decades and more he has been fighting a lonely battle to correct what he thinks to have been a total wrong—the partition of the country. He has suffered for his views, being under virtual permanent house arrest and restricted to his village in San beyond Hyderabad in Sind. He leads the Jeeve Sind movement now and its support, though nowhere near a situation where it could win an election, has grown steadily with the Sindhi perception of colonisation by Punjabis. While no parallels can be exact, Sind after the 1983 MRD agitation is a Bangladesh in the making. Already Sindhi was being suppressed and the population ratio changed in favour of non-Sindhies through large scale migration and settlement on newly irrigated land. After 1983 Sind also got a taste of harsh and often brutal suppression by the Punjabi Pathan dominated army.

G.M. Sayed has not been interviewed by too many journalists, and certainly no one from India has been given such a chance recently. This conversation began with questions about the past and what precisely happened before the creation of Pakistan in the topmost circles of the Muslim League. Mr Sayed provides fascinating insights which should be of value to both the students of the past and the present. The man who helped create Pakistan provides tantalising details of British support of the Pakistan idea and is convinced that partition was a trade off by the British for the support of the League in the war effort.

Churchill told Sir Sikandar in Egypt, 'You Muslims have done us great service. You have supported us when the Congress had opposed us. And we are thankful to you but we also realise that entire India had risen up against the Britishers... But I want to give the last kick to Hindus, by dividing India into two. And you can have Hindu India and Muslim India.'

Q How did you come to know that Sir Sikandar Hayat (Pirana of Punjab then) had come to Karachi? He had been sent for by the Britishers, he was going to Egypt. He was staying in Carlton Hotel, now there is no hotel (by that name), it was near Cannonment station. (Muslim League leader Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon was not in Karachi then, he had gone somewhere. Khan Bahadur Khuro Allah Bux and myself—four of us went to see Sir Sikandar Hayat. Sir Sikandar told me, Sayed, you have done great service to Muslims. I said, How? He said, You have resigned and all Muslim (legislators) have now joined. Now you will be able to get the Land Alienation Bill passed (in the Sind Assembly) because all Mussalmans have joined together. He knew that we were fighting only for the sake of the

Land Alienation Bill and the Rent Control Bill—these two Bills were controversial (because the Hindu members of the Assembly were opposed to them). Then he told Allah Bux, Allah Bux, now you should join the League. Allah Bux told him, Sardar Sahab, he was called Sardar Sahab—I am a man of principle. I am not going to join the League because the League is a Britisher's party. Allah Bux was an ordinary zamindar, but he had come into contact with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others. He said, I won't join the League because the League is the government's party, a Britishers' party. And I am convinced that the creation of Pakistan is going to be of great harm to Muslims, and Islam, and Sind. I am not a person to join the League. But I have joined (the government) because Maulana Abul Kalam Azad told me to join the ministry so that Bills may pass. Sir Sikandar said

CONVERSATION

'But I am there. I have joined the League,' Allah Bux replied, 'Your conscience seems to be an elastic conscience.' He said, 'How?' He (Bux) said, 'Only 15 days before you have said in the Punjab Assembly that Pakistan is a misnomer. Jinnah doesn't believe in it; it is useless.' This speech of Sir Sikandar is quoted in a book written by a Hindu gentleman who was secretary to government of India.

Q: Was it V.P. Menon? Transfer of Power?

A: Yes, V.P. Menon. He has written the speech.

Q: That is a very famous speech of Sir Sikandar.

A: Sir Sikandar had said in the speech, 'Pakistan is nothing, it is useless. I don't believe in Pakistan.' He had said only a few days back (when we met him). All of us had read that thing. Sir Sikandar said, 'Why do you blame me?' Even Jinnah doesn't believe in Pakistan. We all talk of Pakistan because of certain circumstances. None of us believes in Pakistan,' Sir Sikandar said. You know, by that time a Resolution had been passed, the 1940 Resolution, the Lahore Resolution. In that there was not a single mention of Pakistan. Jinnah was afraid to take the name of Pakistan, because (he thought) the Britishers would not like it. Sir Sikandar said, 'Allah Bux, you know and Sayed knows, and all others know, that at the time of the First Round Table Conference, the chairman of the Parliamentary commission had asked the question of Jinnah, 'What do you say about Pakistan?' Rehmat Ali, at that time, had written some pamphlets about Pakistan, 'P' for Punjab etcetera. Jinnah replied, 'We have nothing to do with the word Pakistan. Some student boy has been spreading this news. We have nothing to do with it. Jinnah and Zafrullah have definitely spoken against Pakistan. It is all humbug.' Allah Bux said, 'I am not going to support Pakistan. I gave support to the Muslims because they are going to benefit, they are going to get land (through the Land Alienation Bill). But I am not going to support the Muslim League.'

Q: Why did Sir Sikandar resign from the Working Committee of the Muslim League?

A: That was in 1942. I am talking about 1940. So, that was the talk (we had at Carlton Hotel). Allah Bux refused to join the Muslim League and Allah Bux said, 'Pakistan was the worst thing for Muslims. I am not going to be party to this crime.' Then Sir Sikandar went over to Egypt. Churchill met him. At that time General Rommel was marching over to Suez. Hitler's plan was that if he could capture Suez, all the support from India would be stopped, because that route would be blocked. It was the same strategy as was followed by Napoleon Bonaparte. Churchill knew that if Hitler captured Suez, then the whole British effort would be finished. The majority of the (British Indian) army was made up of Sikhs and Punjabi Muslims. Sir Sikandar was leader of Punjab so he went and spoke to him. They (the Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs) were already mercenaries. Churchill told Sir Sikandar in



Gandhi with Jinnah

Egypt, 'You Muslims have done us great service. You have supported us when the Congress had opposed us. And we are thankful to you but we also realise that entire India had risen up against the Britishers. Gandhi is so powerful that we can't keep India in future. So I have decided that the British should vacate India and India should be handed over to Indians. But I want to give the last kick to Hindus, by dividing India into two. And you can have Hindu India and Muslim India.'

Q: Is there any record of this conversation?

A: Yes, yes. There is in the British Cabinet records. And recently this has been quoted by Wali Khan when he said that the division plan was not Jinnah's plan but Sir Zafrullah's plan.

Q: Who later became the foreign minister?

A: Yes, yes. When Sir Sikandar was told by Churchill, 'We want to leave India and divide India into two: Muslim India and Hindu India. Because you have done great service to us. And then it is our plan also because in future we can't depend upon Hindus. In future we can depend upon Muslims because you have been so faithful to Britishers in our bad days. Therefore I have ordered the Governor-General that he should prepare a plan for the division of India. Under my instructions he has handed over the work to Sir Zafrullah and Sir Zafrullah has already been preparing a plan of division. So the work has already been done. Rest assured.' Sir Sikandar immediately flew over from Egypt to Bombay and he spoke to Jinnah: 'Why are you afraid? Our Britishers have already given us a parting gift. Now they say they are going to divide India and you come out openly and say that we want Pakistan.' Subsequently I came to know all this. By the grace of God, certain persons are still remaining—certain persons are still alive who remember this.

Q: Who?

A: Yusuf Haroon. In 1942, he was not a member of the working committee of the All India Muslim League. But he was more or

Gandhi and Nehru were far above Jinnah. He was nothing before them. He was a freak of fortune.



Mahatma Gandhi in Noakhali

I didn't leave Gandhiji. I left the Congress. Gandhiji had also left the Congress, at one time he was not even a two anna member of the Congress.

less a colleague. Whenever he was the general secretary, I was president of the Muslim League. We went over in 1942 to Bombay (for the Muslim League working committee meeting). Yusuf came to me. He said, 'Sayid Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung has come and he says Hindus have (realised they have committed) a mistake, now they need the opinion that they should come to some understanding with the Muslims. So we should meet Rajagopalachari.' Rajagopalachari was already kicked out from the Congress because he said, let the provinces decide whatever they like. But Gandhiji was adamant that there should be one united government in India. Then Yusuf Haroon took me and Khuro both to Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung.

Q He was from Hyderabad?

A He was president of Indian States Muslim League. We went to the Green Hotel in Bombay near the Taj. Myself, Yusuf Haroon, Khuro and Nawab told me, 'Sayid, why should you depend upon the Britishers? Now Rajagopalachari and others, Mridula Sen, Krishna Hathee Singh, they all want to meet you. For what, I asked. He said, 'They have realised, the Congress has made a mistake. So they have made a mistake. So they want to meet you. They want to come to an understanding with the Muslims. They want to come to an understanding. They will give you Pakistan. But that should come through an understanding, not through the Britishers, because you will then be entirely dependent on the Britishers. So a lunch was arranged at the home of Khurshed bhen—Dadabhai Naik's daughter. I, Khuro, Mridula

Sarabhai, Khurshed bhen and Krishna Hathee Singh. They said, 'You should so arrange that Jinnah and Gandhi meet. The working committee is sitting and you should move the resolution.'

Jinnah, at that working committee moved a resolution that the Quit India movement (just launched by the Congress) was not against the Britishers, it was against the Muslims. I said, with what face can we say it was against the Muslims, I am not going to accept it. He (Jinnah) said, 'No, no. We have some understanding with the Britishers. They will give us (Pakistan) and the Hindus will not accept (Pakistan)'. Sir Sikandar was not coming around. He was not accepting Jinnah's verdict. Then Jinnah threatened Sir Sikandar that I will kick you out from the League, and then Sir Sikandar resigned from the working committee. In that working committee meeting of the Muslim League I moved a resolution that Jinnah should meet Gandhiji. I said, I have met Congressites and they are in a compromising mood, they want to come to an understanding with the Muslims. When I moved the resolution, 'Who is going to support you?' Jinnah said, 'He was a dictator. He was so dictatorial that he thought there was nobody there to oppose him. Then the thing came to vote. Even Khuro didn't vote for it. I was the only man who voted. S. N. Aswami has written a book on Jinnah in which he has said that the only person who didn't agree with Jinnah on this subject was G. M. Sayid. I opposed Jinnah, and said, record my dissent. From that day Jinnah became vehemently against me. How Sayid can say something against me.'

In that meeting the Raja of Mahmudabad said he was going to support me. Jinnah said, 'Shut up. So the Raja went away, left the meeting. Then Aswami said, 'Sir, let us listen to him. Jinnah said, 'Don't talk on the subject. I said, keep quiet.' Then Nawab Ismail Khan tried to say something and Jinnah said, 'No, I am not going to listen. Let me take votes.' Votes were taken. Nobody voted for me. This is how our quarrel started. Jinnah said clearly in that meeting that the Muslim League has given a promise to the Britishers and the British had given a promise to give us Pakistan, that they have already decided to divide India and we should get Pakistan through the Britishers. But you know one thing, many of us used to think that Muslims are a separate nation.

Q You were convinced about it?

A Islam was on our nerves. Subsequently I learnt that there was no Muslim nation as such in the world. They are all fighting each other. Muslims had never been united after the Prophet's death. There are 356 Muslim sects and each sect says that we will get salvation and the rest go to jahannam (hell).

Q What is your experience now that Pakistan was created in 1947?

A I separated from Jinnah and the League before the creation of Pakistan. The second time the quarrel came with Jinnah was when Jinnah supported Sir Ghulam Hussain against the president of Sind Mus-

lim League The Sind Muslim League decided to finish the Sir Ghulam Hussain ministry, I broke the ministry with a majority of Muslim League voters. Jinnah sent a message 'Immediately you should surrender or resign from Muslim League. I am not going to allow this thing.' Then he sent for me and Sir Ghulam Hussain in Bombay. 'You should come to terms,' he said. Sir Ghulam Hussain was involved in corruption. I told Jinnah, if you want to keep me as president of the Muslim League, I can't allow him (Sir Ghulam) to do all these things. We sat for three days, Jinnah and myself.

I became president of the Muslim League in 1942, after Sir Abdullah Haroon died.

You know, I did not want to become president of the Muslim League. I said no, anybody could become the president of the Muslim League. Jinnah said 'Why? I said I know that you are thirsty for power. You want to retain all these dirty people in the League, in the ministry. And as the president, I will not tolerate these sort of things. Therefore, the best thing would be, he should not allow me to become the president. Sir Ghulam Hussain said he has to become the president. They wanted to buy me. I said I don't want to become the president.

Q: When did you begin the movement of Sind nationalism? When did the idea come to you and why?

A Separatism. Have you seen my latest book (*A Case For Sindhu Desh*)? The evolution came with the understanding that Muslims are not a separate nation; that Sindhi Muslims are doomed. And that Punjabis were going to unbalance us (in Sind). At the time of the creation of Pakistan, only five per cent of Sind's population were non-Sindhi. Now 48 per cent are non-Sindhis.

Q: Is this a colonisation process?

A Yes, non-Sindhis are increasing by over 55 lakhs every year. After him, if nobody should be abused, even if he is not a Muslim. But I am deadly against Bhutto because Bhutto passed the 1973 Constitution. We, all the residents of Pakistan, became 'one nation'—with the result that any number of persons can now migrate and settle in Sind. And where, in 1947, only five per cent of our population were non-Sindhi, the percentage of non-Sindhis has risen to 48, and if this continues within 10 to 12 years, Sindhis will become a minority. There will be no Sindhi language, no Sindhi culture, no Sindhi interest, nothing of that kind. Either we will have to finish (Pakistan) or be finished.

Q: How do you compare the relationship

between Sindhi Muslims and Hindus vis-à-vis Sindhis and Punjabis. Would you rather have Sindhi Hindus back than Punjabis?

A Yes, I had come to an understanding with Mr Mujibur Rehman. I had accepted his six points but I was defeated in the (1970) elections. Wali Khan is a practical politician (His father) Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan is an idealistic politician. There is a great difference between son and father. That happens. Sometimes a great man's son is a third rate man. Gandhi's son Hiralal used to become a Hindu for six months, Christian for six months and Muslim for six months, all sorts of things.

Q: What were the terms with Mujibur Rehman?

A When he came to Karachi, I gave him a *lungi* (as a sign of friendship) and we accepted six points. After I was defeated, I went to Wali Khan. As one Pathan leader said, how can we accept this principle (of six points)? Punjab is the lion. He catches the prey (Bengal and Sind) and we are like jackals. Whatever is left by the lion is eaten by us.

Q: Do you seriously think you can achieve a separate country, Sind?

A It is not believed, but it is a certainty. Pakistan cannot remain for long.

Q: Why do you say that?

A (Laughs) That is why I want the present government to continue. (The implication is that the army will once again preside over the break up of Pakistan).

Q: Have you come to terms with President Zia, as some people allege?

A Zia wanted to meet me twice. First he sent Iqbal Baksh and Rahim Baksh. Both of them came to me and said Zia wants to meet you. I said there was no use meeting him. I did not come to an understanding with even Jinnah, Or Iskander Mirza, or Ayub Khan. Now how could he expect me to compromise with Zia? I told them it will do no good. It will do me no good. He said how? I said because I know he (Zia) is entirely in the hand of the corps commanders, so if he is meeting me without their consent, when they come to know, they will kick him (Zia) out. If he is meeting me with their consent, then what is the meeting all about? We talked. I said I have now definitely become against Pakistan and he is for Pakistan.

Q: But Zia did meet you when you were in hospital.

A This was the second time. He asked me one question: Why did you not join the MRD? I said the MRD people have no principles. There is a fight between you and

The Sind Muslim League decided to finish the Sir Ghulam Hussain ministry. I broke the ministry with a majority of Muslim League voters. Jinnah sent a message: 'Immediately you should surrender or resign from the Muslim League. I am not going to allow this thing.'

'When there is a war (between India and Pakistan), at that time we (in Sind) should be conscious that we should be on the side of India'

CONVERSATION

The Hindus have created great personalities like Gandhiji and Nehru. Have we created even a single person worth mentioning after the establishment of Pakistan?

them for loaves and fishes. You want to remain in power, they also want to remain in power. So how will I be interested in changing your government? One group goes, another group comes. And there is a saying in Sindhi, *Lachu khaye bholo, kachu khaye taku*, so why should we in Jeeve Sind go to jail for the sake of Jatoi, Benazir and others? Her father (Bhutto) has done greatest harm to Sindhis and Sind. We have not forgiven him. So why should we interfere? Then I told him a joke. I said, a Pathan was watching a dancing girl. Someone asked the Pathan, 'Lala do you understand what she is singing?' Is she singing *thumri* or *dadra* or *Piloo* or *Bageswari* or some other *raag* or some *ghazal*? Do you understand?' The Pathan said, 'I understand everything, all this is an excuse for sex.' So—you want power, they want power, why should we pretend there is a lot of culture in between? So why should we interfere in the fight between power thirsty people?

Q General Zia told me you are one of the best people in Pakistan.

A I have said two things recently. I have said that if he (General Zia) is the custodian of Islam, then I am the custodian of *kufur*. I am basically against Pakistan, he wants to retain Pakistan on the old theory which has been exploded. Let him do so and let me do what I want. He has got his own principles, and I have got my own principles. I don't believe in third rate people who talk about Islam. Jatoi and others are worse than this man because they talk about democracy. What was Bhutto's democracy? Bhutto was not a democrat. Bhutto was not a man of principle. Bhutto was not a true Muslim. Bhutto was third rate person.

Q You come from Sind whose Sufis have given this subcontinent a great message. Can Pakistan be called a part of this Sufi message?

A No. Pakistan is a creation of hatred. It is against the traditions of the Sufis.

Q What did the Sufis have to offer?

A Love, unity in diversity.

Q How do you see the future of India and Pakistan?

A To be united.

Q How?

A Either in confederation or condominium (that is, joint sovereignty).

Q Most people in Pakistan would call that another name for subjugation by the Hindu majority Indians.

A Pir Pagaro sent me word. He said do you want to again come under the subjugation of Hindus? I sent him a message that there is a saving. It is better to get a kick from an elephant than from a donkey. (Laughs)

Q What was his reply?

A No reply. They have created great personalities, the Hindus like Gandhiji, Nehru. Have we created even a single person worth mentioning after the establishment of Pakistan?

Q What do you think of Gandhiji and his contribution? After all you left him and joined the Muslim League.

A I didn't leave Gandhiji. I left the Congress. Gandhiji had also left the Congress, at one time he was not even a two anna member of the Congress. Four annas was the subscription of the Muslim League and two annas of the Congress.

Q Do you think Gandhiji's message still has any relevance?

A Yes, certainly. I am a follower (of Gandhiji) to a certain extent.

Q What is the extent?

A Non violence, love, unity of India, these things I follow.

Q Where do you think Gandhiji went wrong?

A Circumstances didn't favour him. He didn't himself go wrong, but circumstances worked against him. He never willingly or consciously went wrong. But circumstances were such that he had not too many things to do except follow his conscience.

Q This controversy about 1946, about accepting the Cabinet Mission plan for a confederation of India and the Congress rejecting it, can you shed some light on what actually happened?

A Several books have been written on this. Everybody has given his own point of view. Nehru committed certain mistakes. Jinnah committed certain mistakes. All politicians have committed certain mistakes. If Nehru had not said that we are accepting this plan with mental reservations, then Jinnah would not have got the opportunity to go back on his word. But Nehru gave an opportunity.

There were two groups in the Britishers. One group, those who got training and were good Englishmen, believed that they had come to India with a mission—to unite India and leave certain principles behind, democracy etcetera. There was another section who were imperialists, who wanted to keep India permanently under their rule. But they did not succeed, so in the end they kicked India divided it and went. It was against history that India should be separated. India has (through history) moved from time to time towards unity. Asoka tried to bring unity by force and subsequently by bringing



Gandhiji with Nehru at a Congress meeting

CONVERSATION

Buddhism And then Vikramaditya tried to bring unity through Hinduism. That didn't succeed. But it did contribute to an extent. But Akbar the Great did the best thing—seeing the unity behind all religions and conquering other problems in other ways. He also moved towards unity of India. Buddhism gave India the philosophy of non-violence long before Christ. If there is going to be anything which is going to save the world, it is non-violence. Non-violence and love—they both come in the same category.

There cannot be violence in love. Non-violence is the basic principle through which the world is going to be saved. So that was another contribution from India. And then Khuwava Moinuddin Ajmeri and all the Chisti khaandan (family) the Sufis of Sind, Shah Latif, Sarmast and Guru Nanak. Ghulam Shah Baba Farid—all these persons were talking unity among all religions. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Kabir Bhagat, the whole Bhakti movement said the same thing. Sufis said that unity was God's plan. There is a difference between religion and materialism. Materialism doesn't believe in plans, but in accidents. Everything comes with accident. Accident after accident. The entire world (says science) is based on an accident and religious people say that the entire world has been created with a purpose and a plan. According to Islamic principles the world has been created with a purpose and a plan. This purpose and plan is unity. Unity of mankind. From unity comes peace. From peace comes progress.

Q: Did Jinnah and Nehru hate each other? Do you remember any conversation with Jinnah about Nehru?

A: I knew him (Jinnah) from the very beginning, since 1920. From those days when he was nobody. When Jinnah and Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto were going for the first Round Table conference from Karachi, 3,000 persons came to see off Bhutto. Only four persons came to see off Jinnah: myself, Haji Abdullah Haroon, (Pir Ali Mohammad) Rashdi and one more. There was a big dinner given in honour of Shah Nawaz Bhutto. Of course, they had spent their own money and collected 3,000 persons. Jinnah, Haji Abdullah Haroon and myself contributed and invited 40 persons in Carlton Hotel in honour of Jinnah to keep up his prestige.

Q: What did Jinnah feel about Gandhi and Nehru as people?

A: How can we be anxious to know the opinion of a person who himself is a nobody before us? What Jinnah can say about Gandhi? Gandhi and Nehru were far above Jinnah. He was nothing before them. He was a freak of fortune, just like Bhutto. History creates people. If you read the Muslim history, can there be any comparison between Hussain and Yazid?

Q: They fought a battle one lost and one won. What is the political evolution that you see for Pakistan now?

A: Somebody asked me, what do you say about the confederation? So I said there are three views about confederation. One view is held by Ataullah Mengel; he said that there should be confederation between Baluchis and Sindhis. I said that is also unthinkable because who is going to get us this? Unless Pakistan is broken, it can't come. The second type of confederacy is advocated by Mr. Mumtaz Bhutto. I don't know what he says, but he wants confederacy between all the provinces of Pakistan. One, two, or three subjects should be left to centre, rest should come to provinces. I gave then an instance of mice who was going to bell the military cat? I told (Z.A.) Bhutto that he should not (become a pawn) in the hands of the Punjabis. I told him before Mumtaz Bhutto that after getting things done from him, the Punjabis would kill him. And subsequently he was killed. Now this man is a good man.

Q: Who?

A: Zia. A good man in the sense that he is a Punjabi because we can see our opponent directly. There is no disguise like in Bhutto's time. Bhutto considered himself Sindhi but he worked against Sindhis and did greatest harm to Sindhis. And the second thing is that Zia is taking Pakistan towards disintegration. I want this disintegration of Pakistan. So that means I like him. He is doing my work in a different manner.

Q: What was the impact of the 1983 MRD movement?

A: We boycotted it. We didn't join them.

Q: But it was a powerful movement.

A: It was not a movement of Bhutto or Bhutto's satellites. It was because the Sindhi people were sick of Punjabis; they wanted an outburst. So when they saw the opportunity they burst out.

Q: Do you think there will be another outburst soon?

A: I can't say. The only thing is war between India and Pakistan and Russia. When there is a war at that time we (in Sind) should be conscious that we should be on the side of India.

Q: Do you think Rajiv Gandhi will fight a war?

A: I can't say. Because when his mother was approached by us, her secretary told our man: 'We are *banias*. We do everything where it suits us. And why should we fight for others?'

Q: Mrs. Gandhi said that?

A: She herself didn't say that but her secretary said so.

Q: Who was her secretary?

A: I don't know—somebody was there. My man who went over to Delhi. He was sent by me to India. But he did not succeed.

Jinnah replied, 'We have nothing to do with the word Pakistan. Some student boy has been spreading the news. We have nothing to do with it.'

Zia is a good man in the sense that he is a Punjabi because we can see (him as) our opponent directly. There is no disguise like in Bhutto's time... And the second thing is that Zia is taking Pakistan towards disintegration. I want this disintegration of Pakistan.

Target: Rajiv Gandhi

On 4 May 1985, the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the USA arrested four Sikh extremists and brought an end to a conspiracy to assassinate the Prime Minister during his visit to that country in June Sharon Butler reports from Washington on the plot

On 26 January 1985, two young Sikhs entered the New York Hilton Hotel. One was Gurpratap Singh, a 33 year old computer programmer of Automated Tools Incorporated in Mount Vernon, New York living in a second floor apartment at 500 A 5th Avenue at Brooklyn. He was accompanied by a friend, 25 year old Lal Singh, a resident of 4204 Saul Street in Flushing, Queens on the outer limits of New York city. They were trembling with excitement that day they had arranged to meet a mercenary an American who said he was from Alabama and who claimed he had expertise in weapons and explosives from his days in Vietnam.

How they had contacted the American is not clear but it is not so difficult to hire a mercenary in the US. In Chicago for example, there is a group called the 'Top Hatters'. Their calling card has a top hat and crossbones on it and they will do anything for a fee—from breaking bones to quietly 'eliminating' some one. There are also magazines like the *Soldiers of Fortune* which are sold in ordinary bookstalls and carry advertisements from men ready to hire themselves out for military ventures, touting their familiarity with lethal devices and methods the way a secretary boasts of her typing speed. Birk and Singh must have chanced upon such an advertisement.

The American's story was essentially true. He was indeed a Vietnam veteran and had been decorated with the prestigious Congressional Medal of Honour. He had been part of the elite Navy Corps Seal which trains men in the use of explosives and automatic weapons for urban and guerrilla warfare. But the two Sikhs knew only this much of the American's past. They did not know that he had also been an informer for the FBI for the last five and a half years. Court documents refer to him only as 'A'. 'A' had already tipped off the FBI about his meeting with the two Sikhs. Unknown to Birk and Singh, the Hilton hotel room had been fitted with a hidden video camera. From the moment they entered and started talking to 'A' their actions were recorded. The plot had failed even



Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

Siddhesh Shankar

SPECIAL REPORT



(Left to right) Gurpratap Singh Birk, Sukhvinder Singh, Virinder Singh, and Jasbir Sandhu unsuccessful plot

before it had begun

The two Sikh extremists Gurpratap Singh Birk and Lal Singh suspected nothing when they went to meet their American contact at the New York Hilton Hotel on 26 January. Perhaps they had heard stories like the one about how a Jewish youth league had hired an assassin to kill the PLO chief Mr Yasser Arafat and figured there could be no repercussions. Or perhaps they had come to believe that Americans supported the radical Sikh movement in India after all how many press accounts in India had accused the US and the CIA of lending a hand to the separatists?

Birk was friendly and outspoken heady with his misguided extremist notions. Last year he had formed a radical group called the Sikh Students Association of North America and just after Operation Blue Star his men walked into the Indian consulate in New York City, smashed a picture of President Zail Singh and broke a statue of Mahatma Gandhi. The consulate staff had to forcibly throw them out.

At the meeting with 'A' Birk was unrestrained. He immediately took the man into confidence and asked the American to call him only 'John' since his name was difficult to pronounce. Birk and Singh set out their plans. They said they represented a group seeking to overthrow the Indian government. They wanted to bomb strategic locations in India—a nuclear plant, bridges, hotels, government buildings—all of which they named. If they succeeded Birk and Singh claimed, the people would lose confidence in the government which would fall on its own. They also told 'A' that they wanted to assassinate political leaders in India, including Mr Rajiv Gandhi. What they wanted from the American, Birk and Singh explained, was "military training" for an initial cadre of seven men in the US. These men would have to be taught the use of explosives and

automatic weapons and trained in urban guerrilla tactics and chemical warfare.

After the preliminary training, 'A' would accompany them to India as an adviser until the seven were proficient enough to impart training on their own. The two Sikhs also asked the American for explosives and machineguns that they could smuggle into India and false American passports to help easy travel in and out of the country. This was ideal material for a spy thriller but the American did not raise any questions. Birk, quick to flaunt his confidence, said he would find a suitable location for the training camp.

Business done, the three men shook hands and parted. The two Sikhs emerged from the New York Hilton brimming with confidence. They were so elated that they took no precautions. Plainclothes FBI men hidden in the city congestion trailed the two, located their residences and subsequently checked their gas and electricity bills and telephone records. The FBI was zooming in what they now needed was more evidence. Some of that was soon to be provided.

The undercover FBI agent, 'A' posing as a mercenary to the two Sikhs, Gurpratap Singh Birk and Lal Singh, had passed on the details of the Hilton Hotel meeting to the authorities. But the FBI wanted more evidence enough to uncover the whole plot. It was then that Birk and Singh arranged another meeting with 'A'—this time at a hotel in Westbury, 30 km from New York, on Long Island 'A', citing security precautions, manipulated the change of venue and with the help of FBI fitted a hidden video camera in the room. Birk and Singh did not bother to question him.

On 20 February they brought along another friend, Ammand Singh, but Birk did most of the talking. He was in a hurry he wanted the initial training completed by 10 May. How

soon could 'A' begin? he asked. He also asked 'A' to devise a method by which C-4 explosives could be smuggled into India. How much explosives did the group need? 'A' asked. The Sikhs conferred in Gurmukhi for a while then Birk replied with confidence. Enough to blow up the Triboro Brooklyn or Queensboro bridges. Also he added, enough to raze a 36 storey building. Birk gave 'A' a list of small arms and machine guns and specifically requested for the Ingram 9 mm Mach 10. Eventually he said they would also need grenade launchers.

'A' was also given photographs of the seven extremists who would form the first cadre of guerrilla trainees.

'A' was to obtain for them false American passports. The photographs included those of Birk, Lal Singh and Ammand Singh. Between 20 February and 27 April 'A' contacted Birk and Lal Singh more than once by telephone to work out the modalities and exchange status report. Meanwhile Birk had found a place in Columbia, New Jersey, for a training camp about one and a half hours drive from New York city. It was perfect. Birk was later to tell

'A' Columbia was a small town with a population of less than 500, isolated in the hills west of New York. No one would suspect anything. There was a house where the trainees could reside as also a place to safely store explosives and weapons. On 27 April 'A' arrived in New York met Birk at his home and asked if he could inspect the training ground.

Birk, Lal Singh and 'A' set out for Columbia. On the way Birk and Singh said they had changed their plans of assassinating the Prime Minister in India. They would now assassinate the Prime Minister in the US during Mr Gandhi's visit in June. They wanted 'A' to do it or to find someone else who could. 'A' agreed and described three ways in which the plan could be carried out. An intense discussion ensued, how much

would each one cost? What kind of equipment was needed? What were the loopholes in each plan? Which one was most likely to succeed? The details laid out, Birk and Singh conferred in Gurmukhi. Finally, Birk turned to "A" and gave the go-ahead. But he wanted action immediately, the arrangement for payment would be finalised later. "A" was taken around the training camp site and further plans were fixed. "A" was to bring the plastic explosives and training was to begin on 6 May.

Gurpratap Singh Birk and his associates decided to drop the plan of starting the training camp at Columbia on 6 May when they came to know that the Haryana chief minister, Bhajan Lal, had arrived in New Orleans for medical treatment. Birk was always confident: here was his chance to prove that he was no armchair extremist. He now had the opportunity to act.

As soon as Birk learnt of the whereabouts of Bhajan Lal, on 3 May, he telephoned a man whom "A" had introduced to him. Birk came to the point without wasting any time or words. "Can you get me a 'hit man'?" he asked, explaining that there was an Indian official temporarily in New Orleans whom his group wanted to assassinate. But "A's" contact told him that was not possible. So the next request: Could he please be provided with a firearm which could not be traced? He was convinced that brown people were quite capable of carrying out the assassination.

What Birk did not know was that the person he was speaking to was not someone who arranged for "hit men" but was in fact a special agent of the FBI. As soon as the line was disconnected, the special agent called James Nagel at the department of state, who confirmed that Bhajan Lal was indeed in New Orleans and that he was an internationally-protected person. Immediately, the New Orleans police was alerted and security around Bhajan Lal tightened. Meanwhile, unaware that the FBI was on their trail, Birk and a friend got into a car and began the 1,600 km journey to New Orleans. At Alabama the next morning (4 May), Birk and his friends stopped at a gunshop to buy a .45-calibre Astra automatic pistol for \$220. They also wanted to buy a silencer but this was not available.

The salesman, Paul Johnson, another Vietnam veteran and former Green Beret, was an acquaintance of Birk, who called himself "Suki" in Alabama. But Suki now looked different. As Johnson recounted, he looked clean cut, he had shaved his



Bhajan Lal: a close escape

beard and cut his hair and had removed his turban. But he did not recognise the other Sikh accompanying Birk. Though he had a beard, he was not wearing a turban. In fact, Johnson suspected that he was hiding his long hair under a jungle hat that he was wearing. Birk, on this morning, seemed to be more gay than usual, and while chatting with Johnson, bragged about how he intended to assassinate an enemy of the Sikhs who was staying in New Orleans. In fact, he said he knew exactly where to find him. But what Birk did not know was that Johnson's business associate was another FBI informer. At one pm on 4 May, Birk and his friend decided to leave for New Orleans, just another 300 miles away.

The same morning, an Indian foreign service officer, staying with Bhajan Lal at hotel Meridian spotted some Sikhs who appeared to be keeping a watch on the building and he immediately called the police. By the evening the plan had collapsed, and with it Birk's dream of assassinating the Prime Minister. At 10 pm, New Orleans policemen found four Sikhs loitering on the sidewalk outside the hotel. Among them was Birk. The others were Sukhvinder Singh (25), from Bronx in New York who had driven to New Orleans with Birk, Virinder Singh, 25, and Jasbir Sandhu also 25 years old and from New York. When the police arrived, the Sikhs were handcuffed and the Indi-

an official was brought to identify them. He overheard the four Sikhs talking to each other and though they had told the police that they did not know each other, it was clear that they did. In fact, one was telling the others not to talk.

At New Orleans police headquarters, officer Joseph Lopinto told the Sikhs about their constitutional rights under the US laws and informed them that they were not obliged to answer any question, in case they felt it would be incriminating. It was special inspector Volney Hayes who conducted the interrogation. He first picked on Virinder who seemed nervous and his hands were shaking and he was sweating. "We're together," he said, nodding towards Sandhu. "He does not speak good English." Then Virinder asked, "Do you want me to tell you the truth?" And when he got a nod from Hayes, he said, "We are here to hurt him." When asked if he was referring to the "man in the hotel," he said yes, and then fell silent, refusing to answer any further questions.

Today, five young men (including another Sikh who was arrested later) are lodged in a medium-security prison at New Orleans, facing charges of trying to assassinate a foreign official—something which could fetch them life imprisonment. Is this an isolated plot, or is it just the tip of an iceberg, with many other people plotting to assassinate the PM?

The Shiv Sena Captures Bombay

Can our most cosmopolitan city survive the Shiv Sena's parochialism?

Money speaks in Bombay. Anyone in search of a living or an El Dorado queues up to get it in the most cosmopolitan city of this country. There is every kind of job for everybody. So it was in the Sixties and the Seventies that Bombay witnessed an invasion of people predominantly from the south of India. The original Marathi speaking inhabitants of the city found themselves being edged out of almost

every place—jobs, living space, etc. Even Bombay's infamous underworld came to be dominated by people from south India.

It was around this time, in the Sixties, that Bal Thackeray, then a popular cartoonist in the *Free Press Journal*, was ill-treated by his south Indian boss. Thackeray quit his job and vowed to get even with the people from the south in particular and other non-Maharashtrians in general. In 1966 he formed the Shiv

Sena and started his own magazine, *Marmik*. The Sena was a cultural organisation and its main slogan was "Maharashtra for Maharashtrians."

In those early days *Marmik* used to publish a long list of names of people—mostly non-Maharashtrians—who held top positions in companies. With the publication of the names, Thackeray achieved his object—he effectively aroused the consciousness of the Marathis.

The Shiv Sena's popularity grew in



At a Shiv Sena meeting: (from left to right) Sudhir Joshi, Pramod Navalkar, Wamanrao Mahadik, Bal Thackeray and Manohar Joshi

"Bombay is Like an Overcrowded Railway Compartment"

Writes Nilkant Khadilkar, editor *Navakar*

Article 19 of the Constitution of India is subject to other provisions like 1(G) and 1(F) which provides for settlement in any part of the country subject to 'reasonable restrictions.' It is not correct to flaunt Article 19 vaguely. There is no such thing as a fundamental right without "reasonable restrictions." The term "reasonable restrictions" is open to discussion and interpretation. In the case of *Narenthra Kumar vs Union of India* (AIR 1960 SC 430), the Supreme Court held that restrictions can include even total prohibition. There must be reasonableness which is a justifiable issue. The courts have authority to determine if a particular restriction is reasonable or not.

Prof. Dandavate is suffering from an illusion and is misguiding the whole nation. Half the population resides in *ghopadapattis* and are deprived of their rights to clean air, water and shelter. Unless and until the government can provide these people the basic rights and amenities there should be no further influx. This is not a linguistic feeling but a humanitarian one. If people are already living on the foot paths then the new ones will have to live in the gutters. Do we want this? My contention is that people

cannot trample upon the basic fundamental rights of others.

Bal Thackeray made a mistake, if he said that people who came into the city after 1974 should be driven back. This is not proper. The point is now that we must ensure a cut off date say from 1 May 1985 which happens to be the 25th year of Maharashtra. For such a step the whole population will have to give its support. I would like to use the analogy of an overcrowded railway compartment. When it is full people from the inside throw out the others who are still trying to push their way in. Bombay is like an overcrowded railway compartment and the only solution now is not to let anyone else in.

I do understand that there is less employment and development in other states but then why should people run away from those states? They should fight against their government and demand jobs and houses. But they do not do this and instead come to Bombay and make demands on our government. It would be simple enough to introduce an internal passport system to regulate the entry of people into the state. I believe this is being done in Pakistan also. It is reasonable and essential for any type of planning.

the Sixties primarily due to the threat of domination that the Maharashtrais perceived. Despite the propaganda unleashed by the Sena the migration from the south did not stop. But the party grew in strength. It had the blessings of politicians and industrialists. S.K. Patil the then chief minister and uncrowned king of Bombay saw in the Shiv Sena a convenient tool to strengthen the rightist forces. The business community and Ramakrishna Bajaj in particular saw the Sena as an answer to the communist terror in the trade unions. The Shiv Sena in fact came in handy to counter the muscle power of the trade unions dominated by the communists. And they were very successful: the communists were literally wiped out of the trade union

scene in Maharashtra.

The party's decline had set in by the late Seventies though the Sena ruled the Bombay Municipal Corporation till 1973 and produced four very popular and efficient mayors. The downhill journey of the party came about because of the severe fighting in the lower cadres. Maharashtrais however continued to feel threatened by the influx of non-Maharashtrais into the city especially since they increasingly began to control both money and power. The pattern of migration meanwhile changed. Instead of the people from the south thousands poured in from the north of India especially UP and Bihar. There was a boom in the building trade, communications and the hotel business where Rajas

thanis and Punjabis vied with each other to capture a sizable share. The latter part of the Seventies and the Eighties saw the influx not only of people from the north but also of ministers like Chandrakant Tripathi who were imposed on Maharashtra by Sanjay Gandhi. Sanjay Gandhi wanted to change the demographic composition of Bombay to ensure financial and political control of the commercial capital of India. The insecurity of the Maharashtrais finally found expression during the recent civil elections as borne out by the fact that the Maharashtrais voted en bloc for the Shiv Sena candidates contesting on the Marathi *Asmita* slogan. The chief minister, Yashwantrao Patil understood this unlike the BPCC(I) president Murlidhar.

The Sena's propaganda that non-Maharashtrais do not care for Bombay became evident when the issue of the influx into the city was brought up in Parliament. Not one member spoke up for the city. Neither Murlidhar nor Sunil Dutt nor even Gurudas Kamat or Anupchand Shah said a word. Even Madhvi Dandavate from the opposition has hardly ever bothered to apply his mind to the problems of Bombay.

Yashwantrao Patil is playing a double game of hunting with the Shiv Sena and running with the non-Marathi moneybags. It is well known that the CM is close to the big builders. It is believed that if he panders to the Shiv Sena it will not be for the betterment of the Marathi speaking people but to perpetuate his own rule. He does not have a popular base in Bombay. For that matter no Marathi speaking ruling party politician has much of a base in the metropolis. In the situation it is no wonder that the Shiv Sena has been able to make a niche for itself coming as it did on vote catching demands like better civic amenities for the people of Bombay. The brunt of the Shiv Sena's stand is that the government cannot provide basic amenities like water, sanitation, shelter etc. The situation has been aggravated by the centre which has given a niggardly Rs 50 crores against the Rs 1000 crores demanded by the state for Bombay.

The Shiv Sena feels that the people who come from outside the state looking for their Dubai and Muscat in Bombay should make demands on their own state governments to create more employment. And the Sena chief, Bal Thackeray is bent upon taking the government to task for this migration.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

Who's Who in the Shiv Sena

The Shiv Sena is an organisation which does not have a hierarchical structure. Bal Thackeray is the supreme leader. There are discussions at various levels on every issue, but the final decision is taken by Bal Thackeray, even if it concerns the appointment of a *shaka pramukh*. The Shiv Sena has 160 *shakas* which is equivalent of a municipal ward, and each is looked after by the *shaka pramukh*. The *shakas* are the mainstay of the Shiv Sena organisation and each *shaka* devotes at least two hours a day to Sena work in its area. There is also the *vibagh pramukh* which is equivalent to a parliamentary constituency. The Shiv Sena has various wings like the Bharatiya Kamgar Sena (labour wing) which has unions in 600 units, Lokhadhikar Samiti which finds employment for youth, Chitrapat Shaka which looks after the interests of Marathi films which hitherto never got theatres for release. There is also the Vidhayarti Sena and the Bhavani Bank which provides loans to the needy. The pride of the Shiv Sena is its brigade of 20 ambulances and hearses which any citizen can avail of. The call numbers for these are with all hospitals and it is said that when Amitabh Bachchan was brought from Bangalore to Bombay, he was carried in a Shiv Sena ambulance to the Breach Candy Hospital.

• While Shiv Sena Pramukh Bal Thackeray presides over the organisation, there is a team of senior leaders who are, in a way, the second line of command. One of them is Pramod Navalkar who is considered the righthand man of Bal Thackeray. Navalkar is a journalist and also works as personnel manager in shipping company. He belongs to the Pathare Prabhu community which with the Kolis are the original inhabitants of Bombay. He is extremely proud of this and is an active member of the community and seeks to recreate the good old days when this community ruled the Girgaum area. Today, there are hardly any Pathares in the area. Those who were there have been bought out by the 'outsiders' and have naturally moved to the suburbs. It is one of the projects that Pramod Navalkar and the Shiv Sena have against outsiders and

their money power. As a journalist Navalkar has been running a column for 26 years in *Navashakti*. It is called "A wanderer's column" and he is also incharge of two magazines, *Brahmanti* and *Prabhu Prabhat*, which is the oldest Marathi magazine in Bombay being 63 years old. Navalkar created a controversy last year when he tried to put in a good word for Mastan, Karim Lala and other allegedly reformed smugglers and underworld dons. He said they were "Valmikiis" and should be given a chance. This created a furore in the Marathi press. Navalkar, however shrugged off the controversy and continues



Sena leader Bal Thackeray

to maintain his controversial links.

• Manohar Joshi: Now a professional builder with a company called Kohinoor Builders, Joshi was one of the finest mayors of the city. During his regime he planted around one lakh trees throughout the city. He also has a very successful string of coaching classes. Joshi started out as a clerk in the assessment department of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and quit it to become a corporator.

• Sudhir Joshi: Also a former mayor, Joshi was one of the youngest mayors the city had. Like his predecessor, Manohar Joshi worked for the city and it was he

who coined the slogan, "Clean Bombay, Green Bombay". His lifestyle is simple and until a couple of years ago one could see him waiting in a bus queue with his briefcase for a bus like any other citizen. One does not know whether he has acquired a car now that he is also said to be a successful builder. His company is called Build Quick and he is said to be developing properties along the Bombay-Pune highway and building up a thriving business. Joshi was a good legislator, but unfortunately he lost in the last Assembly election when the Rajiv Gandhi wave swept the city. Joshi looks after the Lokhadikar Samiti in the Shiv Sena. The Samiti is, perhaps, responsible for seeing that 80 per cent of them are reserved for Marathi-speaking people in government, corporations and private sector companies.

• Wamanrao Mahadik: Also an employee of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. He contested the municipal elections and became a councillor. When the Shiv Sena was the largest party in the corporation in 1968, Mahadik was one of the four mayors. He is an insurance agent now.

• Dattaji Salvi: Was a labourer in a mill when he joined the Sena. He has since retired and for some time now he has been looking after the labour wing of the Shiv Sena. Of late the Sena's labour wing has not been as successful as it was in the late Sixties and Seventies. The party has been overtaken by Dr Datta Samant's unions. The Shiv Sena has already derided the Kamgar Agadhi's defeat in the municipal elections where the Shiv Sena won over the Agadhi candidates which included Dr Samant's brother, in the labour areas.

The Shiv Sena now has a third rank leadership. They are Chagan Bhujbal, the mayor of Bombay who also holds the distinction of being a legislator. There are also some other people: Datta Nafawade, a corporator, and Mr Sarpotdar who works as personnel manager in a multinational firm. Sarpotdar shot into fame during the Kherwadi riots. His arrest for his alleged role in the riots provoked hundreds of women and children to *gherao* the police station in protest.

Gita Telle, Bombay



Twenty one years after his death with four years to go for the commemoration of his birth centenary it is time to make a historically objective assessment of the role and contribution of

Jawaharlal Nehru. It is not as though his biographers have been found wanting or that historical or contemporary interest in this political titan is lacking. But his biographers and critics alike were as close to this overpowering personality as they were to the events of the era: those years of tumult, joy and hope. Any assessment of this kind calls for a deep understanding of the great era, its ethos and substance.

What is the abiding legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru, the great captain of our struggle for national liberation, a hero of two generations of his countrymen, one who struggled and moulded and enriched the goals and texture of our freedom struggle and directed its course to its final destination along with Mahatma Gandhi? Jawaharlal Nehru was different and he differed openly with the Mahatma and many of his colleagues—but without a trace of malice or anger. He was sure of his convictions and could express his vehement dissent often with an unerring sense of history and of national destiny. He posed the question: Whither India? He answered it for himself and his generation. He looked at the forces which had moulded human thought and action in the subcontinent where historic forces at work had manifested themselves differently. He went on to understand the motivating forces of history. He was not just a sensitive intellectual or a historian of the armchair type. Here was a man of action who inspired mass action. From the decisive moment of the Jahanwalla Bagh days, he remained in intimate contact with the people, whether they were the peasants of Pratapgarh and Rae Barail or people of the feudal fortresses then called the Indian native states.

He shared the agony of the peasantry under the British, but had no use for those who would rather compromise with the native and alien oppressors. He drew his sustenance and strength from them, close, yet aloof in his discovery of India. From Jahanwalla Bagh to the banks of the Ravi in Lahore when he was crowned the 'Rashtriapati' of the national li-

beration movement, he had come a long way, the transformation of an Inner Temple lawyer to a potential revolutionary was complete. He talked differently from the Mahatma of the unity of the oppressed people, socialism and of India's role in the fight against fascism and the brave new world yet to be born. Being impatient, he was shocked at our little quarrels and occasional fratricides and was amazed at the influence of rituals, superstitions and religion. There were undoubtedly moments of self-doubt when he would even meekly submit to his mentor's decision. But he moved forward with faith in himself, his people and the nation's destiny. This then was the man who ushered us into freedom and became our first democratic Prime Minister.

What does this legend and legacy mean to the new generation? A child born on 27 May 1964 would attain adulthood and acquire his or her vote and right to participate in the democratic processes of governance of the country now. How does this legend and legacy affect him and those who constitute the majority of our nation today and those who are shaping our present and indeed the future? If one were to judge from the pronouncements of his own grandson, the present Prime Minister, and those who surround him on his seat of power, much of Jawaharlal Nehru's legacy has become irrelevant or is of no consequence to a nation about to emerge into the 21st century with all its expectations and prospects and trappings of a new modern society. Is this historic legacy already in its twilight?

It is important in this context to understand the perspectives Jawaharlal Nehru threw up during the freedom struggle and after independence and the developments of post-Nehru India to understand this legacy. Not only did Jawaharlal Nehru create history but was also moulded by the national and international environment and forces which shaped the world of his generation. The Mahatma had converted and shaped the Indian independence movement into a powerful mass-based struggle for national liberation. The movement had its impact and imprimatur which was unique in many ways. It was influenced by his moral and spiritual quest and 'experiments with truth' as he called them. He stiffened the spines of a subject nation to rise in revolt against the bulwark of imperialism, tempered by a moral fervour which

Is Nehru a Men

What is the legacy of Jawaharlal Minister and the hero of the free Mahatma Gandhi steered it to his legacy mean to those who died 27 May 1964 and who vote? K P Unnikrish



u Just iory?

*1 Nehru, India's first Prime
lom struggle who along with
final destination? What does
ere born on the day Nehru
ve now acquired the right to
an MP answers*



came from his lonely quest for truth rooted in India's past, with all its contradictions. But his *satyagraha* or *charkha* or his abhorrence for violent means had far reaching consequences. It is as though the Mahatma had understood the Indian social reality almost intuitively and he knew it needed drastic surgery. But he was not prepared to accept the logic of a violent revolution. The shrewd, calculating leader that he was, he perhaps had doubts about the organisational limitations of violence. In the context of a divisive society did he think that violent change would be counter productive in the long run? Or was he bound by tradition which he had often defied almost following the footsteps of Gautama Buddha 2,500 years ago? But there isn't any doubt that the Mahatma had conditioned the masses to accept his norms, if not ideology and it had become the most dominant influence on the freedom movement, and indeed on Jawaharlal Nehru and his generation.

Jawaharlal Nehru knew that there were bigger forces at work in contemporary history. There was a powerful influence of socialism. Marx and Lenin and the Soviet experiment and the crisis in the capitalist system which had led to fascism and war and misery for millions. Jawaharlal Nehru understood these powerful forces at work and knew that India could not live in splendid isolation. He also understood the meaning and significance of the historical drive towards an egalitarian society. It is yet another matter that he did not become a conventional Marxist or that he was equally influenced by the Fabians and a Tawney and a Bertrand Russell. Jawaharlal Nehru knew that the 20th century India of his vision not only had to be a free nation but also had to adopt socialism as its goal within a democratic framework. Democracy he realised would be a meaningless ritual if poverty, filth, misery and squalor could not be removed. This was the man who took on the mantle of Gandhi by his own right and with the enthusiastic and tumultuous consent of the millions of his countrymen who adored him and placed their unqualified confidence and trust in him and gave him their affection in abundance. There is hardly any parallel to this phenomenon.

What is important is that Jawaharlal Nehru did not emerge from this mass adulation with a variant of Indian Caesarism as he had once

feared. He knew how fragile the roots of democracy were in India, but consciously made an effort to build up values and institutions which would survive him. So, he was pained to see some of his contemporaries in the newly liberated countries trying to snuff out dissent or build a personality cult. It was this Jawaharlal Nehru who, ignoring protocol, had asked a surprised Nkrumah during their first meeting "What the hell do you mean by putting your head on a stamp?" While many of his contemporaries were sceptical about its outcome, he insisted on adult suffrage and built up a sovereign Parliament as an instrument of decision making and social change. Thus, he put fundamental rights and directive principles on a pedestal as the central thrust of our democratic Constitution. Jawaharlal knew that social change within a parliamentary framework alone could ensure a social revolution and maintenance of national unity, security and stability. He also knew the powerful influences at work in a ritual bound traditional society and the amazing hold of obscurantist forces at work. Secularism had become an article of faith with him. India had to be secular if it was to retain its freedom and unity.

A nation in the throes of change had to ensure its sense of direction. Jawaharlal Nehru projected the objective of socialism and an egalitarian society and instruments of national planning. Socialism can only mean decisive change in property relations but for him it could only be within the limitations of the parliamentary framework. He was clear in his mind that a mixed economy was only a phase which India had to pass through. Therefore, he fought relentlessly against the emergence of the Swatantra ideology which he was sure could not be accepted by the impoverished masses. He also endeavoured to build up a scientific temper, for it was clear to him that modern science and technology was the most effective instruments of change anywhere, more so in a tradition bound society attempting to emerge into a modern phase of its existence.

The Indian nation was born into a bipolar world and Jawaharlal Nehru, who moulded our world outlook had laid the foundations of non alignment and peaceful coexistence and was in vigorous pursuit of peace as the goal of humanity. This policy itself was an inheritance from

our freedom struggle, along with our commitment to anti imperialism, anti racism, anti Zionism and promotion of Asian and African identities. A close identity of views and interests developed between India and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, based more on national interest than on ideology. But the romantic element in Nehru could not see through the Chinese game which had profound consequences for our nation. He could not understand the Pakistani ruling elite whose metamorphosis into a military ruling clique he detested. The democrat in Nehru could not compromise with a military dictatorship in this sub continent which he had helped to liberate from British imperialism.

Wedded as he was to the pursuit of peace and disarmament, Jawaharlal endowed us with an international purpose. The sense of national purpose was clear and well delineated and the paths and goals clear in spite of major limitations and hurdles in the way. The Nehru years were thus years of promise, endeavour and achievement for the new born nation, nationally and internationally.

With the end of the Nehru era, many sharpening contradictions within and without were brought into focus. Chinese intrusion across the border in 1962 and the aggressive neighbour's military designs had

pushed up the question of national defence and security higher on the agenda, which had its own impact on the national economy, compounded by droughts and devaluation. Mrs Indira Gandhi followed the national consensus on a foreign policy of peace and non alignment. The Indira years provided a large measure of continuity of policies in spite of aberrations like the ill advised devaluation.

The Indian National Congress, after Jawaharlal Nehru and the brief spell of Shastri was fast losing its sense of direction and thrust, which was reflected in the great divide of 1969. Indira Gandhi was, however, able to rescue the Congress for a brief while and identify herself and the party with the people. This resulted in the massive mandate of 1971. Steps like abolition of privy purses and nationalisation of banks enthused millions while the victory in Bangladesh war added a new dimension to this eloquent expression of the united will of the people. While Mrs Gandhi continued to lay emphasis on non alignment, secularism and socialism, her approach to institutions built brick by brick by the founding fathers eroded the democratic fabric and diluted the historic significance of her remarkable achievements of 1969-72.

But the truth was the very massive

mandate and victory in the Bangladesh war had changed her attitude to democratic institutions whether it was the Parliament, the judiciary, the press or her own party or the opposition or the organised trade union movement. This style was, of course, encouraged by a climate of sycophancy which grew up in the Congress after the split and conditions were built for building up a personality cult. This was a major departure from Jawaharlal Nehru's glowing example of a democratic leader's restraint and led to the distortions of the Emergency era. The democratic fabric was the major casualty while marginal improvement and relief was provided through schemes like the 20 point programme with its agrarian content. The Congress became a shadow of its former self and democratic dissent in the party was stifled. The Janata interlude restored the institutional imbalance a little but its inability to build a party based on a national consensus and the split in the Congress convinced Mrs Gandhi that she alone could be right and others were wrong. Frustrated by the Janata experiment the people were left with no option but to turn to Indira Gandhi.

The dynastic element which she injected into the body politic and which was nurtured by a climate of sycophancy in the ruling party further eroded our democratic credibility. Sanjay Gandhi declared the end of all ideologies and politics was reduced to a Machiavellian power game. The Congress(1) thus became a strange amalgam of many ritual bound Congressmen who were looking to the Supreme Court and the Election Commission to tell them what the Congress was while various new entrants who hardly knew its background or whose commitment was questionable, swelled the party's ranks and changed its complexion beyond recognition.

However it must be said to the credit of Mrs Indira Gandhi that she was able to establish a remarkable sense of identification with the poorest of the poor who were roused from centuries of slumber by her forthright and committed pronouncements after the Congress split of 1969. These strong ties had given her an excellent opportunity to provide leadership for a basic structural transformation of society and the economy. She also had a rare insight into the international forces at work and stood for essential national interests with a sense of dignity and forthrightness that enhanced India's international prestige. This legacy of Indira Gandhi should not be forgot-



ten and it was a historic contribution that she made during her long tenure. However, we are too close to the events to pass a final judgment on Mrs Indira Gandhi whose tragic assassination has indeed created a historic vacuum in the national political milieu.

The victory of the Congress(I) at the polls or the emergence of Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister and spokesman and inheritor of the Congress(I) has not changed any of the unresolved problems of leadership or programme. As a leader of the party which has received a historic mandate, he is undoubtedly free to mould his party and its ideologies, but stubborn social realities remain. It is these realities which make Jawaharlal Nehru and his ideological framework of democracy, secularism and socialism and the policy of peace and non alignment relevant even to day. What we are witnessing now is a disoriented effort to propagate half baked ideas on the role of modern technology. The contradictions of India remain and are sharpening and we have to live at two levels of existence: we are at once still hanging on to the bullock cart age and entering an era of progress based on science and technology. This polity and economy of sub continental dimensions cannot be compared to that of small states like Hong Kong or Singapore, or Korea or Taiwan. India remains a rich country of poor people and our anti poverty programmes are fast losing their thrust. Poverty cannot be removed by refurbished slogans or the magic wand of promise of a 21st century of populist policies. It requires the forging of a stubborn political will and a mass line which can evoke a response from the masses and gain their willing cooperation and a framework of policies which can be translated into specific administrative tasks.

When India is facing a crisis of national unity and integrity, it is most important to remember some home truths. It is important to remember that our nation is fundamentally different from other major populous nation states in the world, like China, the USA and USSR. The United States which has been called a 'melting pot nation' and the USSR where the Russian language and cultural tradition has acquired a dominant importance in the Soviet phase, are quite different in background. The great Lenin and the Soviet leadership were able to evolve a policy of nationalities which gave an inner core of strength to the Soviet experiment. In China, the ethnic minorities constitute only eight per cent of the people.



Nehru the sports lover

In India on the other hand we have a multitude of religions and languages and sub national groups with highly developed unique regional personalities. None of us can claim to be the majority. We are a people with great diversity in food, attire, habits and customs and overwhelmed by the strong sense of assertive regional cultures. This historical trend which began with the 'Bhakti' movement has been the developing theme of Indian history. Therefore, the concept of Indian unity and nationhood cannot be based on uniformity. It can only be based on harmony and unity in diversity. Mahatma Gandhi who weired the diverse people of this great sub continent did not overlook this fact and the national movement had decisively rejected the concept of a unitary government. The freedom movement had also rejected the slogan Hindi Hindu Hindustan.

Thus, in 1947, India which went through the trauma of partition and

threats of balkanisation and fragmentation acquired a new national purpose. Obviously, it opted for a strong united India and consequently a dominant centre. This is reflected in our Constitution but the working of the Constitution during the last three decades has shown many inadequacies in its arrangement. There is a fundamental disequilibrium in the union states relationship in terms of distribution of powers, functions and resources between the union and states. While we have achieved considerable progress under national planning, regional imbalances have also grown. These distortions have posed a threat to our unity and given rise to a situation where the states are increasingly dependent on the centre's distribution of doles and grants. The growing disparities in the income levels as between the states and regions on the one hand and between the different sections of the people on the other, superimposed on this deepening crisis have further aggravated social tensions which threaten to create an explosive political climate. Caste has emerged as a potent but obscurantist force to be reckoned with.

It is this very question that has assumed another dimension in Assam and Punjab. The problem is basically of what kind of nation we want—one based on uniformity or one based on unity in diversity and acceptance of the fact of distinctive regional cultural personalities. It is the distinctive regional personalities which have produced sub continental chauvinism and extremism as in Punjab and Assam. It is the bankrupt policies pursued by the ruling party which should bear full responsibility for the consequences of these developments. We cannot promote unity by use of force as a means of state policy.

Can the new generation allow the abiding political legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru to enter a zone of twilight? Its message of unity and integrity, and unity in diversity respect for democratic norms and practice is still relevant. As India is in the most critical decade of its existence, we can only recall what Jawaharlal Nehru noted in the privacy of a diary in the Ahmednagar Fort Prison in 1943, a sentence from Buddha, which he would often quote:

I would enter a blazing fire,
But I would not enter my home
With my goal unattained.

Those who would follow his path can only be enthused by this call for action for there is lot more of anguish and despair than hope in the situation.

'Nehru Attempted to Change Our Thinking by Giving Us a Feeling for History'

P.N. Haksar told SUNDAY



Q What is the abiding legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru?

A I should like to make it quite clear at the outset that all my responses to the

questions you are going to put to me on or about Jawaharlal Nehru must be taken strictly as my personal view on the matter. It does not really matter to me whether the views I express correspond to the judgments of professional historians, political scientists or all those who may have devoted their time to a study on Jawaharlal Nehru. Naturally, I have read almost everything that Nehru wrote. I have also read all that has been written about him. I have been hearing his voice from 1940 onwards. I saw Nehru from close quarters as the Prime Minister from October 1947. In my view, one of his great contributions was his attempt to change our ways of thought by giving us a feeling for history and a sensitivity to historical processes.

You might ask why I personally attach such great importance to history. I do so because in all the years I have spent in government I interacted with politicians, civil servants and others and I have been struck by the fact that when we are dealing with a problem, or confronted with it, we never seem to ask ourselves the obvious question: How did the problem arise? What are the origins and what facts are relevant for understanding the problem as it was evolved? If I am not mistaken, this is a peculiar trait of us Indians. It is rooted in the fact that our classical literature is singularly lacking in historical curiosity. Our concerns

have been with the nature of 'reality' the relationship between "self" and the "ultimate reality," and so on. Now in the middle of the 20th century we are face to face with extraordinarily complex problems of social, economic, cultural and political transformation of India. Yet the attempts to face these problems without any historical perspective has led to our actions being blind. The past which is the accumulated historical experience is the only thing about which we can know with a measure of certainty. The future cannot be predicted in terms of any known laws. The present is ephemeral because it is constantly receding to the past. If we are building as we say a new nation, a modern economy, if we are to stimulate the process of modernisation, we are not acting in a historical vacuum. We in India are living within a historically determined social structure, political structure, cultural pattern, value system which are rooted in our past and which continue in the present. So from any point of view, anyone avowedly engaged in changing India, but devoid of a sense of history is apt to flounder or live by empty slogans.

Another lasting contribution made by Nehru which is not unrelated to what I have called, the historical view, was the constant reiteration of the need for, what he called scientific temper. This is not easy to define. However, its implications were made clear by Nehru on more than one occasion. In essence and substance, it meant an emphasis on ascertaining facts relating to a given problem. It means application of reason, as against unreason, superstition or mere feelings. It means proving the rightness or wrongness of a proposition not by quoting a variety of scriptures or of astrologers or of those who set themselves up as interpreters of God's will or God's message. Above all, it meant the separation of the domain of secular from the domain of the sacred. It meant

that social, economic, political and cultural problems could be dealt with only within an analytical framework and on the basis of ascertained and ascertainable facts.

Thirdly, Nehru understood very well indeed that a system has a life of its own and is as real as the individual components of that system and that if one is to work in the system, we should show respect to the rules and regulations of the system. He treated the Parliament with great respect and courtesy. He showed regard and concern for the integrity of the state system in India, of which the components are the civil servants, the armed forces, the police and so on.

Of course, I cannot omit Jawaharlal Nehru's great creativity and originality of thought and action in evolving India's foreign policy. Although this foreign policy has been baptised as 'non-alignment', the guts of the foreign policy lay in ensuring, in all varying circumstances, independence of decision making and independence of action. There is a regrettable tendency to draw this central point of Nehru's foreign policy into a cataract of words poured out on the subject of "non-alignment" in order to find a "respectable" address for a fairly large number of client states to march under the non-aligned flag. I regret I have been somewhat longwinded, but Nehru, to me, meant that even if we are poor, we can still keep our head high with pride and dignity.

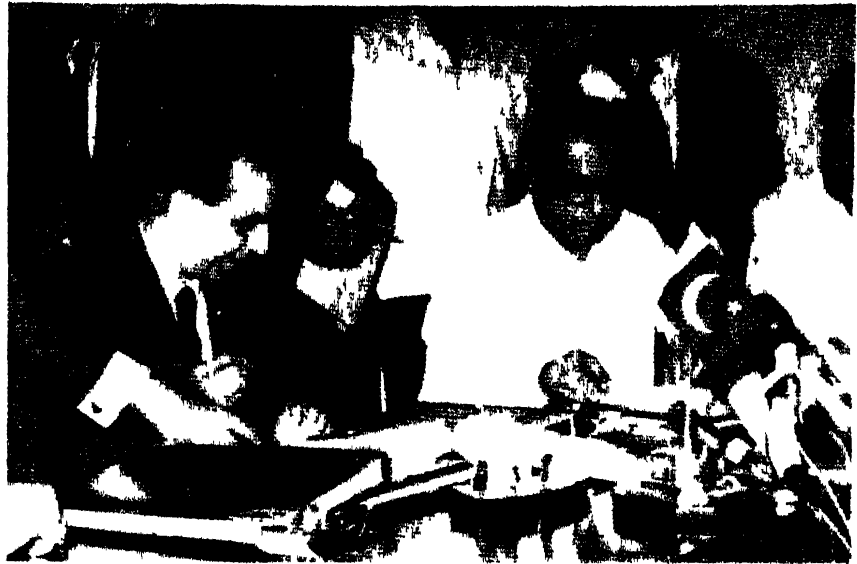
It would be an error to omit the concept of secularism which Nehru tried to promote in our country, in my view, unsuccessfully. And if one examines almost all the problems which are bedeviling us and baffling us, (one will find that they) arise out of the cruel murder of secularism by almost all our political parties for the purpose of seeking political power or influence by appeal to caste, religion, region, language, etc.

Q Is it true that with the Chinese

Diplomat P.N. Haksar, who has been close to the Nehru-Gandhi family since independence, held a number of important positions in Prime Minister Nehru's government. He was also the principal private secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

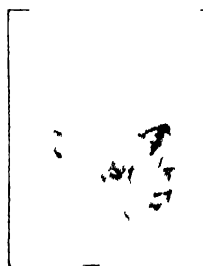
betrayal, our foreign policy lost much of its élan and for a brief while we even felt isolated? Looking back, was it not possible to avert this tragic disaster?

A This question is full of what is called 'its' and 'buts' of history. You know there is a school of history that says that if Cleopatra did not have the nose she had things would have happened differently. So it is a difficult question to answer in that way. But I personally was never involved in what is called the China problem or China policy. I have my own views. I have expressed them also in one of my books called *Premontions* in which there are six or seven essays on foreign policy. I think we not merely Nehru but the nation as a whole committed the error in thinking that China after its reunification is a strong state would behave in a certain manner. I think that assumption itself was wrong. I am not talking of morality or immorality because there is no such thing according to me in international affairs. States act in terms of what they perceive are their interests. I think the Indian experience in the 1920s and 1930s was that China was undergoing the same process struggling for freedom and independence from colonial rule. We had a great amount of sympathy for them. You know we sent a medical team there, raised money by undertaking China campaigns—it was all done within the framework of solidarity among the Asian nations subjected to western dominance. I think that Nehru and all the others concerned thought that China was another Asian country and being Asian would behave in a different way. I think it is a historically false assumption. It is as false as saying that just because the Germans and the French are Europeans they would behave like Europeans. They don't. I think there was this emotional background which I also shared because I belonged to that generation and we cared very much for China. But to carry this past emotion into the period when China and India emerged as sovereign independent states was a mistake. We should have realised that a new China had emerged as a unified country proud and perhaps, even arrogant. We should have anticipated that in negotiating with this new China, we would need to patiently evolve a long term perspective. I am not saying all this to absolve China of the serious trespasses made by it. What I am saying is that we dealt with China more with heart than with head. Of course the Chinese aggression in 1962 meant a serious setback to our



P.N. Haksar (right) with his Pakistani counterpart Aziz Ahmed

country but our people ought not to let their heads in the face of temporary setbacks. Nehru was of course deeply disturbed by what he regarded as an act of betrayal, more specially on the part of Premier Chou en Lai. But in the middle of the crisis Nehru was made to appear in a panicky state. In my view, the sort of letter he wrote to the US President seeking America's assistance was not justified. But the 1962 events and its aftermath put India right upto 1966 in a position where it looked as if we had lost our moorings. We went about for instance in looking for nuclear umbrella which was ridiculous. We were subjected to great pressure when Mrs Indira Gandhi visited Washington in 1966 which is all now old history. But it is a history which is full of lessons. And the lesson is that India is either a worthwhile and meaningful subject of international relations or merely an object of it.



have to go in for a policy of nuclearisation?

It is true that Nehru with all his being abhorred violence, wars and cruelty. Having spent a great part of his life which was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, and seen the effects of nuclear attacks on the two

cities in Japan, it was perfectly normal and natural for him to look at nuclear weapons with justified abhorrence. At the same time he was a person who was full of science and kept pace with the advancing knowledge of science and technology. He therefore saw clearly the potential of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Consequently the position of India as a nuclear weapon was perfectly understandable in terms of his own life experience and the deeply held conviction and the value system he cherished. However, the more I experienced the realities of international affairs, the more I realised that in the arena of international affairs there is a wicked and cruel interaction and pretence backed by power including of course nuclear power. We Indians cannot ignore it is what we try to reduce international relations to Buddhist message or the sermon on the mount or some set of moral principles.

If India is to remain faithful to the aim of its foreign policy which is to safeguard our independence of thought and action then arming ourselves with nuclear weapons is as inescapable a necessity as it is with France, Great Britain, China and others. There is a great deal of confusion in our country when we look at the nuclear weapons in terms of their destructive power and in terms of technology. Nuclear weapon is not a weapon in any accepted sense of the term. It is a symbol of power. And if one possesses this power not for its use in a military sense but in a diplomatic sense, our passionately held views about nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament and so

on become persuasive to the practitioners of the power game. Without this symbol of power, even the most cogently argued case and the most morally compelling arguments appear to them as mere quibbles to be treated with contempt. In my view, therefore, if India is to be, as I said in answer to your previous question, a subject of history and not its object, we owe it to ourselves to re-think seriously the whole question of becoming a nuclear power—unless something remarkable were to happen and the nuclear weapons powers give credible evidence of drastic reduction of nuclear arsenals and serious negotiations for elimination of nuclear weapons from the military cum diplomatic arsenals (take place).

Q. Nehru consciously moulded the Indian mind towards a vision of socialist society and values, but he failed to lead a revolution. Do you agree with this assessment?

A. I rather suspect that your question reflects a great deal of double talk which goes on in our country, especially in the ranks of those who belong to the left in India. It is of course true that Nehru talked about

socialism, he even talked of scientific socialism in his presidential address at the Lucknow Congress. But I don't think he had either the political means or the capacity to design a credible edifice of a socialist India. However in the realm of thinking, he made us conscious both about the planning process and about socialism as a way of solving the problems of our country. In this respect, the subjective feeling of Nehru and the objective realities were at variance. The gap could have been filled by the left in India, but when you look at the broad structure of the left in India, the striking feature of it is its incapacity or inability or lack of intellectual effort to put before the people of India an alternative development strategy taking into account the specific historical aspect of our country. I think blaming Nehru for not bringing a socialist revolution is either a gross act of deception or just simple foolishness.

Q. Twenty one years after Nehru's death, a new generation of the Indian voter has emerged. How do you assess today's youth as compared to the youth in Nehru's time? Besides, between your generation and the

generation that is 21 today, there have been other generations. What do you have to say about their roles?

A. The youth in Nehru's time was universally infected with one simple idea. And that idea was that British rule must come to an end and India should be an independent and sovereign state. The post-independent generations have no such single obsession. The new generation of youth are not an undifferentiated mass. They are the young whose parents have been the beneficiaries of economic development in post-independent years. Their value system, their manners and accents, would show that they have no commitments to anything except their own personal advancement. Then there are young men, trained to a level of excellence in a variety of branches of knowledge, science, social science, management, engineering etc. It is now well known that they look for migration to western countries and more specially to the United States. Those who still stay behind get absorbed in a variety of jobs and there is an element of internal brain drain where a trained engineer joins a bank or a civil service or even becomes a chartered accountant. Their spiritual physiology consists of being always ill at ease and at odds with the society. Then there are of course the ever increasing number of educated, but unemployed youth. Many of them get enlisted as aides of hoodlums of politics both in our bursting cities and in our villages. There are few who contemplate politics seriously but are rather like the seven blind men who could not comprehend the elephant which is India.

I am afraid, the actual situation obtaining in our country today and the age group which is now turning to be 21 is a mixture of sunshine and shadow with the shadow dominating. It is perhaps explainable in terms of extraordinary complexity of our problems and the sheer size of our country. Of course, there are a growing number of our young men and women who possess extraordinary courage in fighting injustices of our tortured society. But these several struggles have yet to gell together to constitute a broad movement for regeneration of our country. I have great hope that the dedicated, courageous and idealistic young men and women of our country, dispersed at present and working at the edges of society, would, in time, develop an integrated design for political, economic and social changes, even of reforms which India desperately needs today.



Jawaharlal Nehru with President Kennedy in the USA

Nehru and the Young

Most of his lessons have been forgotten, despite their relevance today



Jawaharlal Nehru loved children. He dedicated his birthday, 14 November, to children and called it "children's day" symbolising his affection for the young generation.

When he died in 1964, the children born in Nehru's India were 17 years old. On 27 May 1985, a post-Nehru generation of 21-year-olds will join the Indian electorate. What does Nehru mean to them? No other democratic leader in the world has been as fortunate as Jawaharlal Nehru, for, of the 21 years which have passed after his death, his daughter was the Prime Minister for 16 years and the present Prime Minister is his grandson. The name "Nehru", therefore, has not been wiped out in these two decades. But the question is: Is the name still relevant? Nehru stood for democracy in its fullest sense. He laid the foundation of a unique secular state. He created a buffer in a cold war-torn world by making India the largest democracy into a non-aligned nation. He wanted India to acquire the secrets of the atom and yet not use it for military purposes. In more than one sense, Nehru's vision was unique and unconventional. Is his vision still guiding the nation? Or is the name Nehru today a mere commemoration, like the Asiad stadium named after him?

Jawaharlal Nehru's message to the young is perhaps best contained in a speech which he made in New Delhi on 27 October 1961. Unfortunately, the Nehru Memorial Library does not have this speech on record. (Or perhaps the irony of Nehru's legacy is that the best of him has not been properly preserved). The occasion was the inauguration of the Humayun Road branch of Delhi's Modern School. Nehru said, "*Aise parho ki parhai bhi khel ban jaye, aise khelo ki khel bhi parhai ban jaye.* (Enjoy your studies like your games and take your games as seriously as you take your studies)." Nehru wanted the younger generation in India to take life seriously and enjoy doing whatever it was doing. If human beings could imbibe this message of Nehru—of taking the seriousness of the classroom to the playfield and the cheer of the playfield to the

classroom—an entirely new society would be born.

In that speech, Nehru appealed for harmony among religions, communities and the different regions of India. He wanted the schoolgoing Indian in 1961 to learn the importance of communal harmony and national unity. "We, the elder generation did not get an opportunity to learn the importance of this (communal amity and national integrity), therefore often there are fights. You children have to teach the elders the importance of being strong and united. Geographically, India is great—stretching over 2,000 miles from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. But a nation can be great only if its people are strong, intelligent, friendly and have a good mind." Nehru described

India as a "*khandaan*" (family) and called upon the schoolgoing children in 1961 to maintain its unity. In 1985, this message is still relevant. Communal strife and threats to national unity are greater dangers today than they were in the days of Nehru.

In a radio broadcast made in August 1948, on the eve of the first anniversary of national independence, Nehru said, "Democracy means tolerance, tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but those who do not agree with us." In Nehru's democratic India, therefore, there was inherently a place for political dissent. Axiomatically, there was no room for sycophancy. This legacy of Nehru has not been fully preserved. Five years after his death, in 1969, two phenomena were noticed,



Nehru with children

which began the end of Nehru's India. The Congress split affected the largest political organisation in the country. Though Mrs Indira Gandhi engineered the split in the name of "socialism", looking back, it was an attempt to make an organisation subservient to an individual. The political developments, and the aberrations after 1969 may have been avoided if the Congress organisation had remained strong. Nehru had faced opposition from the party on many occasions—he preferred to win political battles within the organisation rather than break the party.

The other phenomenon, outside the political area, which affected Indian society in 1969 was the emergence of a class of neo-westernised youth. The first discotheques were opened in the country in 1969. The pizza-eating, Coca-Cola drinking young people for whom "politics" is a dirty word have their roots in that eventful year. There is nothing in Nehru's legacy which is opposed to pizzas. But the advent of neo-western culture in India, which synchronised with the growth of hippies in the west cannot but be treated as the watershed in India's social history. In response to the questionnaire circulated by SUNDAY, young people have shown a lack of historical perspective. Though they know about Nehru, it is imparted in schools, the lack of consciousness about Nehru among the youth is indicative of the irrelevance of Nehru's vision today. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted young Indians to learn about their nation's history. He devoted most of his writings to this subject. Even 21 years after his death, there is a lack of knowledge about Nehru, then there can be no better indicator of the failure of the system which he tried to build.

The 1969 Congress split, the emergency in 1975, the 1978 Congress split all were the undoing of Nehru's India. Between 1969 and 1975, there still was some debate within the Congress. The Congress Forum for Socialist Action, representing the left and the Nehru Forum (named after him rather ironically) representing the right, carried on an ideological debate within the party. In 1975, the socialist forum and the Nehru forum were wound up. And along with them the concept of debate disappeared from Congress sessions. Mercifully, in the AICC(I) session held in May 1985, when attempts were made to dilute "socialism" (as Congressmen understand it) and take the "commanding heights" away from the public sector, a hot debate ensued and resolutions had to be redrafted. The first AICC(I) ses-

sion held under the presidentship of Rajiv Gandhi somewhat restored the Nehru era. In fact, debate and dissent have returned to Congress forums under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership. In the very first meeting of the Congress(I) parliamentary party in January, dissent was given its due place. Thirteen of the 18 speakers who debated the anti-defection bill expressed views which differed from the official line. And the bill was amended. Again, when the parliamentary party elections took place, some candidates, known to be



backed by a powerful coterie close to the Prime Minister, were defeated. The return of debate within the Congress is a tribute to Nehru. The very fact that "socialism" and the "public sector" sparked off the first major controversy in the Congress(I) shows the relevance of Nehru.

Political organisation, however, has suffered in post-Nehru India. Grassroot work is no more fashionable among the political leaders. Party elections have not been held either in the ruling party or in the opposition parties since long (only the Communists and the RSS-controlled BJP have regular elections). Till ten years back, there was a ritual called the "prabhat-pheri" which politicians, especially Congressmen, undertook on the Independence Day, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday and the Republic Day; it was a ritual but had great importance for the party organisation. Early in the morning, groups of volunteers went around the towns and villages singing patriotic songs, conveying the message of national unity. At least thrice a year, party leaders and workers rubbed shoulders. To day, apart from election time, the two never come in touch with each other.

The Congress(I) has undertaken a cadre-building programme in which paid workers are involved. A monthly expenditure of over Rs ten lakhs is undertaken to keep the "volunteers" going. The need for inner-party democracy and a strong party organisation was emphasised by Nehru because he considered this to be the sheet-anchor of democracy in the nation. He wrote in *Whither India*: "The day for palace intrigues and parlour politics and pacts and compromises passes when the masses enter politics. Their manners are not of the drawing room, we never took the trouble to teach them any manners. Their school is the school of events and suffering is their teacher."

Will the legacy of Nehru survive? Jawaharlal Nehru himself answered the question in *Whither India*: "Leaders and individuals may come and go, they may get tired and slacken off, they may compromise and betray. But the exploited and suffering masses must carry on the struggle, for their drill-sergeant is hunger." Jawaharlal Nehru never compromised on the cause of the common man. He never slackened off in his endeavour to build a new India. His legacy, therefore, can never become irrelevant.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

The Post Nehru Generation

Does anyone remember a hero 21 years after his death?



The first generation of voters to have come of age since the death of Jawaharlal Nehru has all but forgotten our first Prime Minister, his

contribution to the freedom of this country and his vision of India. Or, so it would seem from the responses SUNDAY got from spot interviews it conducted in five metropolitan cities of the country: Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Bangalore. Of the 33 people SUNDAY spoke to (and all of them were young), only two could answer all the questions about Nehru which were put to them. More than three-fourths of the respondents either did not know his date of birth—even though his birthday is celebrated as Children's Day in schools—or the day on which he died.

Interestingly, few knew who succeeded him as the Prime Minister. Seven of the respondents unhesitatingly said it was Indira Gandhi, while two thought it was Morarji Desai. And some others thought it was either Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed or Zakir Hussain. For some of those interviewed, Nehru symbolised either a rose tucked into an achkan, or reminded them of Edwina Mountbatten, while for a few others he was simply the "nice guy" around. A few did, however, remember him as the father of Indira Gandhi. And, in response to questions about Nehru's philosophy and his contribution to the country, most of the answers (from those who did have some knowledge of Pandit Nehru) were: "He fought for the freedom of the country," "He was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi," and "He was the architect of India's freedom."

It is ultimately clear from the brief interviews that the first Prime Minister of India and the person who laid the foundation of the modern nation has ceased to inspire the youth of today. We reproduce some of the interviews. The questions asked were:

1. What does the name Jawaharlal Nehru mean to you?
2. When was he born?
3. When did he die?
4. What was his role in the freedom movement?
5. What was his philosophy and vision of India?
6. Who became the Prime Minister after him?

The answers follow serially

DELHI

Thomas Vettichad, 16, student of class ten, St Columbus School.

1. He was one of the greatest leaders of the country. He started the Non-aligned Movement. He realised the great potential of India and what the people could do.
2. 14 November 1890.
3. 1963. It is noted to be a great day.
4. He followed Mahatma Gandhi's principles.
5. He wanted to make India one of the leading nations in the world and worked with this target in mind. He developed hydro-electric projects and agriculture. He started the atomic energy establishment. He wanted India to live in peace.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Monica Arora, 20, third year MBBS student of medicine, UCMS.

1. He was true to his country. He really wanted to do a lot for India and for the world.
2. 14 November 1890.
3. I don't know.
4. He was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and led the movement when Gandhiji was in jail. He dealt with the legal aspect of the movement. He inspired the masses to struggle for freedom.
5. I don't know about this.

6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Rita Rani, 20, typist.

1. He is the father of Indira Gandhi. He loved children.
2. 14 November.
3. I don't know.
4. He struggled a great deal to free the country.
5. He wanted to remove poverty.
6. I don't know.

Jyoti Malik, 18, student of home science in the International Poly Technic for Women

1. He was very fond of children. He has done much for the country.
2. 14 November.
3. 1964.
4. He held meetings and explained to the people that they must not lose hope and keep on struggling to throw out the British. He did not bother about his family and dedicated his whole life to the country.
5. He wanted the country to be united. He thought all religions to be the same.
6. Zakir Hussain.

Subhash Chander, 20, mechanic.

1. People were very fond of Nehru. He wanted the welfare of the people.
2. I don't know.
3. I don't know.
4. He gave up his life for the country's freedom.
5. He wanted the country to be free, he wanted the people to be happy.
6. Indira Gandhi.

BOMBAY

Vilas Bhilare, 19

1. I respect him because of his love for children.
3. 1964.
4. He played a major role in the freedom struggle and even went to jail.
5. For a free India we will go to jail and even die if necessary—this was what he felt. He wanted India to be a unified whole. We are all one.
6. Indira Gandhi.

Rupali Dularey, 15

1. He was a statesman and symbol of love and affection for children.
3. 27 May, 1964.
4. He organised the masses and gave a definite leadership to the Indian people struggling for freedom.
5. He wanted to build India into a strong nation through industrialisation and wanted to protect its image as a strong nation based on mutual trust. He believed in following a policy of non-alignment.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Ashu Singh, 21

1. He always wore a rose in his lapel. And of course his birthday is 14 November, a day we remember since kindergarten.
3. He died when I was born—1964.
4. Well, as far as I feel he got more publicity than the rest of them who fought for freedom—though they contributed as much or more to the movement.



5. I don't know much about his vision—may be industrialised India. But his philosophy—he claimed to be a socialist, and the rest of the bunch have taken up his refrain now.
6. Gulzarilal Nanda—I think he was the interim PM.

Anita Rattanani, 21, college student

1. A person who laid the basic foundations of free India. He brought stability to the post-independent era. He planted the sapling of democracy and tried his best to nurture it.
2. I can't recall.
4. He had a significant role to play in the history of the freedom movement and the history of the Congress Party. His exact role cannot be stated in a sentence. He was a leading figure of the movement.
5. He visualised a free society. A free India. A strong India. And a united India.
6. I think Gulzarilal Nanda was the interim PM, before Lal Bahadur Shastri took over.

Ashu Sharma, 21

1. He was a nice guy.
3. I don't know—is he dead?
4. He was a hero, I guess.
5. Freedom.
6. Indira Gandhi.

Vineeta Nanda, 21

1. His *achhkan* and rose did something for his personality. He was good-looking and is supposed to have had a powerful voice. I have seen his film on TV. It was great.
3. 1964.
4. He did not appreciate Gandhi's



philosophy of *ahimsa*. His personality helped the movement. He came from a family of freedom fighters. He was a pioneer of the Congress in India.

5. His vision of India—"Sare Jahan se Achha."

6. Gulzarilal Nanda was the interim PM after Nehru.

Sanjay Dulary, 17

1. He was quite confident of himself and that's what appeals to me.
3. 27 May 1964.
4. He gave the country a strong leadership as the main freedom fighter. People came together under him and became one force to fight the British rule. It was his good support to Mahatma Gandhi that was responsible for independence.
5. He wanted a self-reliant India. He wanted the country to remain as one, free from alignment with any bloc. He believed in sustained industrial growth.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

CALCUTTA

Ram Prasad, 18, worker in a grocer's shop

1. He was the Prime Minister; Motilal Nehru's son and Indira Gandhi's father.
2. I don't know.
3. I don't know.
4. He was in jail. He gave his blood and sweat for the country.
5. I don't know.
6. Indira Gandhi.

Sailesh Kumar Khandhadia, 15, student, Anglo-Gujarati High School

1. He was Motilal Nehru's son, Indira Gandhi's father. He liked roses and was fond of children.
2. I don't know.
3. I don't know.
4. He became Prime Minister after independence and gave his life for the country.
5. I don't know.
6. Indira Gandhi.

Ajay Pande, student of Cost Accountancy.

1. He was the Prime Minister of India. He was a freedom fighter.
2. Not too sure.
3. 1960.
4. He was the president of the Congress. Little different from Gandhi. He was the militant type and a little left of Gandhi.
5. He wasn't a socialist at first, but slowly he was influenced by Marx. A little leaning towards the left.
6. Gulzarilal Nanda.

Sanjeev Puri, 14, student, Harrow Hall School

1. He was Indira Gandhi's father, the first PM. He was born in Allahabad.
2. I don't know.
3. I don't know.
4. He fought for India against the British.
5. I don't know.
6. I don't know.

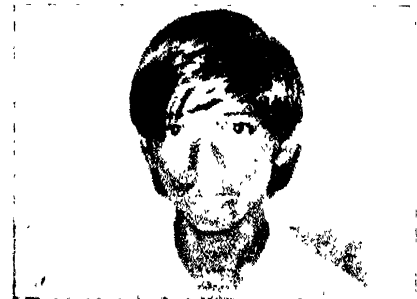
Sunil Parnani, 19, businessman

1. He was Indira Gandhi's father and Prime Minister of the country.
2. I have no idea.
3. I know nothing else about Nehru.

Ranjan Bachawat, 21, college student

1. He was Indira Gandhi's father, a great international leader, the Prime Minister of India. Nehru took us through a crucial period and worked for India's economic takeoff.
3. 1963.
4. He was the guiding spirit behind the Congress. He fought for independence and even went to jail.
5. He modernised India. He was ahead of his times.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

MADRAS



S. Prabhakaran, 16, presently a peon

1. He is Motilal Nehru's son and Indira Gandhi's father.
3. I don't know.
4. He was involved in the freedom movement from the time he was 16 years old. He went to jail. He worked closely with Gandhiji and Tilak.
5. That it should be united and cohesive.
6. Indira Gandhi.

Meghanathan, 18, printing helper

1. He fought for independence. He evolved the Panchasheel. He was one of the founders of the Non-aligned Movement.
3. I don't know.
4. He tried to attain freedom through peaceful means.
5. That it should be united and secular. He wanted India to be rich and self-reliant.
6. Indira Gandhi.

BANGALORE

P.L. Inderjit, 15, school student

1. He was the Prime Minister. He was the father of Indira Gandhi. He was the founder of Swaraj.
2. I don't know.
3. I don't know.
4. I don't know.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Akram, 19, photographer's assistant

1. He was the Prime Minister of India and father of Indira Gandhi.
3. 1964.
4. I don't know.
5. He loved his country and he started many big industries
6. Morarji Desai.

K.S. Radha, 17, first year PUC student, Govt Junior College, Bangalore

1. A lot. But for him India would not have been so modern today. He was a man of action. It was his work and leadership which are responsible for the comforts we are enjoying today. We owe a great deal to him.
3. 1962.
4. Enormous. I cannot just describe it in a matter of a few minutes.
5. International peace was his aim. He wanted and built India on a modern pattern. With the help of other leaders like Sardar Patel, he united the country and cemented it with socialism and secularism.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

R. Sreemathy, 19, first year B.Sc. student, St. Joseph's College, Bangalore

1. A great personality who had won confidence of millions of Indians. He has left many ideas behind for us to tread the path of building a great secular-democratic nation. A perfectionist of great order, the results of whose hard work we are reaping today in modern India.
3. 27 May 1964.
4. It takes days to describe the role he played to free Bharat from British rule. He was with Indian National Congress conceived as a movement by Mahatma Gandhi.
5. He always wanted to rebuild India. To some degree, he succeeded in putting it on par with other great nations of the world. How can anybody forget his 'Panchsheel' which was meant to foster harmony between the two most populous countries China and India. The Non-aligned Movement and socialism gathered momentum under his leadership.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri.



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BIHAR

The Congress(I)'s Rule of the Gun

Five CPI workers are shot by a killer squad

Ram Lakhan Prasad Gupta was serving tea to his customers in a tea-stall in Modanganj near Goshu police station in Bihar on 14 May, when he heard the gun-shots. He quickly managed to hide nearby and has survived to tell the tale. His customers, however, were not as lucky. Five of them, all CPI workers and belonging to the backward classes were shot dead from point blank range, while they were drinking tea. Two children, including a four-year-old girl, were also seriously injured. With the recent killings, the number of murders according to unofficial estimates in the last three years has gone up to over two hundred.

The assassins are alleged to be Congress(I) men, all of whom belong to the land owning bhumihar castes,

and two of them are the personal bodyguards of the Congress(I) Rajya Sabha member Mahendra Prasad who is also known as King Mahendra. Ayodhya Prasad, brother of Chandrika Prasad, one of the five dead, and an eyewitness to the killings, stated that the killers were the supporters of Mahendra Prasad and the local Congress(I) MLA Jagdish Sharma. Apart from Chandrika Prasad, Jagdish Prasad, the *mukhiya* of Modanganj *panchayat*, and CPI district council member (Gaya), Ram Swaroop Prasad, the secretary of the Modanganj branch of the party, Chhotu Sahu and Brajanandan Prasad were killed. "Politics was the only reason," he said discussing the slayings. It is believed that the killer squad was led by Ram Bachan Singh,

the 30-year-old commander of the "Brahmarshi sena." The other members of the killer squad are Shankar Singh and Dinesh, the personal bodyguards of Mahendra Prasad, and Dil-keshwar and Shankar Singh, both noted criminals, said Ayodhya.

Mahendra Prasad, the son of a marginal farmer and a CPI(M) worker in the Sixties, had left the village after seven members of his family had died in a "mysterious" food poisoning case. After wandering around for a decade he returned in 1977, to his village as "King Mahendra," a rich man and joined the feudal elements. He fought and won the Lok Sabha elections in 1980 but lost in 1985. During the Assembly elections this year, Congress(I) advertisements carried his photograph next to Rajiv Gandhi's. Prasad is regarded as the "protector of the landlords" and is considered an emerging leader. "The annihilation of his rivals in Gohsi must be a part of the game," says a Congress(I) leader. Pramod Kumar, a local CPI leader also accused the Congress(I) for the killings. Elections to the Jehanabad constituency have rarely been peaceful and 12 persons had died during the Lok Sabha elections. On election day during the Assembly elections, eight people were killed. According to Kumar, the killings are the Congress(I)'s way of taking his revenge on the village, which has voted almost *en bloc* for the CPI since 1957.

The police, while investigating the case has also taken into account the murder of eight bhumihars, allegedly by the yadavs in April in the nearby village in Gandhan. According to Anil Kumar Pandey, DIG (Police) Gaya range, who admitted that there was tension in the area since the elections, the police is investigating into the charges regarding the involvement of Mahendra Prasad and Jagdish Sharma. While all the five men accused of murder are absconding, both the politicians are in Delhi and thus, are unavailable for comment.

Kripalani, an elderly villager said that Mahendra Prasad had been thirsting for revenge after his defeat in the Lok Sabha elections. During the campaign of the Assembly elections, Mahendra Prasad had addressed a

Villagers consoling the families of the victims



rally of his supporters where he openly preached a policy of violence. As a sign of support, 300 gunmen present at the meeting had fired shots in the air. But the Modanganj villagers ignored the threat and voted overwhelmingly for the CPI, says Kripalani.

The Congress(I), however, denies this. Ranjit Kumar, a Youth Congress leader also accused the yadavs of exploiting the harijans, denying them minimum wages and kidnapping some of them. The present incident, he said is related to another, one month ago, when the yadavs and the harijans exchanged fire for hours. The police however, denies that such an incident took place. The DIG, Mr Pandey, explained that the yadavs have formed a "Loric Sangram Sabha" keeping the harijans away from it.

According to another Congress(I) leader, the murders are related to the post Lok Sabha poll CPI-Indian



Mahendra Prasad

People's Front (IPF) conflicts. The IPF had jointly fought the elections with an alliance with the CPI that had made a number of promises to the IPF which it has not kept. The murders, said the Congress(I) leaders, was the revenge for not keeping the promises. An IPF spokesman, however, denied the charges saying, "We are happy that the king lost the

election and the allegation of our involvement in the killing was purely aimed at defaming us as the feudals are scared of our increasing popularity there." Observers, however, believe, that the local leaders of the Congress(I) are trying to strengthen their positions by playing off the CPI against the IPF.

Till the moment of going to press, the police is yet to make any arrests. Despite the presence of two battalions of the Bihar Military Police, the situation remains tense. CM Bideswari Dubey who was scheduled to leave for Delhi on 14 May, put off the visit by a day to give necessary instructions to the authorities. The additional chief secretary Mr Nathan and the Patna range IG, D.N. Sahaya, have also visited the spot. But the cries of the women and children continue and retaliation is perhaps not far away.

Yubraj Ghimire, Patna

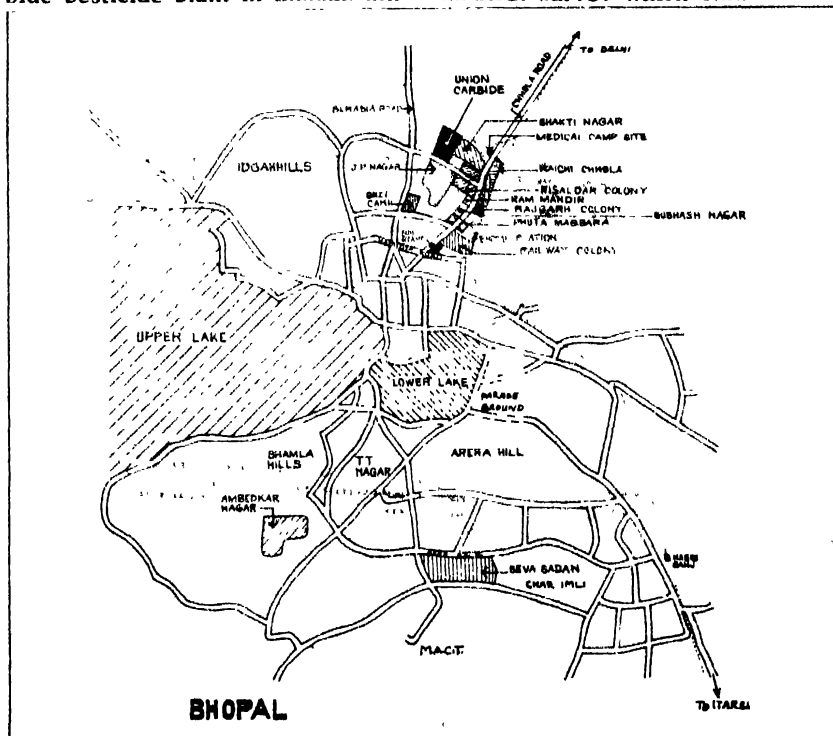
BHO PAL

The Legacy of a Killer Gas

Over one lakh citizens are affected, states a report

More than 100 days after the killer gas Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) leaked from the Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, kill-

ing over 1,000 people, 42.9 per cent of the population continue to have persistent medical disabilities." A medical survey which claims to be



A map of Bhopal showing the affected areas

the "first definitive professional assessment of the health damage caused by MIC among a statistically significant sample of the affected population" was conducted by a medical team from KEM hospital and B.Y.L. Nair hospital of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. The volunteers who helped the medical team were from the Nagrik Rahat Aur Punarvas Committee, the voluntary Association of India, Bhopal Relief Trust, Indian Social Institute, Bhopal, Nisedh Samiti and Dalit Panthers (Bombay). The report which has just been published revealed that three-and-a-half months after the tragedy, the health of two-and-a-half lakh people exposed to and disabled by the gas continues to be "alarming and worrisome."

Summarising the overall observations of the survey, the report states that "1,07,249 citizens of Bhopal City out of the total exposed population of 2,50,000 were seen to have a persistent medical disability of some kind or another. Out of this, 43,864 citizens are still in the stage of mild to moderate disability, a sizable proportion of which may be salvageable with energetic management. The approximate cost for treatment of these victims would work out to be Rs. 107 crores, 24 lakhs and nine thousand a year."

The team divided the population into two groups. Group one consisted of people residing half to two kms from the Carbide plant, while the second group consisted of people residing more than eight kms from the plant. A medical camp was orga-

nised at Kainchi Chola, half a km from the plant

In the first group 79.9 per cent of the adults showed respiratory symptoms, 65.6 per cent eye symptoms, 60.3 per cent gastro intestinal symptoms, 54.5 per cent neuro muscular symptoms and 75.5 per cent gynaecological symptoms, 67.7 per cent have persistent vision affliction and 70.2 per cent have lung functional abnormalities. The complaints among the majority of children was of neuro muscular weakness and between 21.59 and 47 per cent had respiratory, eye or gastro intestinal tract problems. Neuro muscular symptoms in the first group increased to 62.9 per cent as compared to 43.6 per cent in the initial exposure. This increase was caused by even the mildest exertions.

As the respiratory symptoms and disabilities due to them were most marked of all system involvement, all the 569 subjects were evaluated by the team of chest specialists and pulmonary technicians. "The predominant respiratory symptom of cough was present in 72.6 per cent of group one subjects and in 17 per cent of the subjects in group two. One pulmonary function, involving restrictive disability was present in 57.1 per cent and obstructive disability in 42.9 per cent of the subjects." Chest radiographs in 394 subjects revealed that in group one, 55 per cent of subjects had various types of deposits characterised by linear punctuate, micronodular shadows with honeycombing as additional features in some others.

On calculating the extent of total disability, the report says, "It was noticed in group one, 49.1 per cent of the subjects had varying degrees of disability as opposed to 33.7 per cent disability in group two subjects. The disability could be classified as mild in 27.6 per cent and moderate to severe in 21.5 per cent of subjects in group one. In group two, on the other hand, 64.2 per cent of subjects revealed no disability at all. Mild disability was seen in 28.7 per cent of subjects and moderate in eight per cent of the subjects only. After the final evaluation, the survey has revealed that more than 100 days after exposure to MIC gas, 42.9 per cent of the population continued to have persistent medical disabilities."

The report has suggested that "all facilities for follow up, clinical examination, pulmonary function tests with oxymetry and chest radiology should be made available to the population locally at Bhopal to enable proper and adequate medical rehabilitation of these unfortunate victims. The report also cautions that

the potable water in Bhopal needs to be made safe for use of the citizens by scrupulous follow up studies on the water to see if it is getting slowly decontaminated over the last four months. If not some methods of quick decontamination will have to be made though in consultation with experts.

The problem is clear and alarming, says Tapan Bose, the well known producer of the film on the Bhopal gas poisonings, who is part of the Nagrik Rahat Aur Punarvas Committee, Bhopal. The chief minister of MP and the commissioner of Bhopal have been saying since December, that people are on the road to recovery. Yet 104 days later, the people are being exposed to permanent lung disabilities. Bose said that the wives of two of their volunteers delivered babies with similar abnormalities in their lungs, livers and brains. "We documented this," he said "and we also heard that other women had given birth to babies with enlarged heads, partial paralysis and skin rashes."

The other point that comes up is

the alleged massive "cover up" of medical facts by medical agencies helping the government. The Indian Council of Medical Research is reportedly spending Rs one crore and seven lakhs as funds to the Gandhi Medical College and the Ahmediya Hospital attached to the college and the Sultania Jananna Hospital. The dean of the college N P Mishra and Dr N R Bhandari, the superintendent of the hospital, have taken positions that are going to affect the victims of Bhopal adversely, says Bose. "They had said that the water was safe and yet 104 days after the tragedy we found the contamination of Bhopal water by thiocyanates present to the extent of 2.4 ppm (parts per million) as against the thiocyanate level of 9 ppm in Bombay water taps." If the lives of the victims are to be saved and further suffering to be averted Tapan Bose says, the government of Bhopal will have to treat medical problems on a war footing and quit fooling the world that all is well with the poor victims of MIC gas unleashed by Union Carbide Ltd.

Oiga Tellis, Bombay

NEW DELHI

The Men Behind the Blasts

Police arrests terrorists

In the week long interrogations since the arrest of three persons suspected of being behind the bomb blasts in Delhi on 10 and 11 May, the police have lost one of them and

Kartar Singh Narang being arrested by the police



obtained tiny bits of information. The questioning has thrown up enough to indict Kartar Singh Narang and Mohinder Singh Oberoi, the two surviving suspects, but the police have got little that could lead them to the masterminds behind the blasts. Some names and addresses however, have been revealed, the most important one being someone called Kohli. According to what Narang and Oberoi have told the police, Kohli was their main contact on whose directions they acted. Kohli also had several meetings with the three at the West Patel Nagar residence of Narang, immediately before the blasts. On 4 and 5 May, Kohli had told them that they should now be "ready for action" and that the bombs were on their way. A day before the blasts, he informed them that some bombs had arrived. It was Kohli who gave them all the instructions. He is now a much wanted man but seems to have disappeared—no details about Kohli have surfaced apart from his name. There were nearly a hundred other names and addresses of people, generally from parts of North India, that were recovered from the two but here again that police seem to have hit a wall as

most of these people have disappeared.

It was revealed during the interrogation at the Deshbandhu Gupta Road police station where the suspects were kept under heavy guard, that the "transistor bombs" had been planted at various points in the capital by a taxi hired from a man who stays in Malkaganj, a central Delhi locality. The driver and five residents of Kingsway Camp, not far away from Malkaganj, have been taken into custody. The Delhi police have also, during the course of the investigations, "unofficially interrogated" dozens of other suspects.

According to police sources Mohinder Singh Oberoi has revealed a lot during the interrogations while Narang has largely "remained quiet." It is suspected that Narang's son, Ravinder Pal alias "Cuckoo" "missing" for some weeks, helped in the manufacture of the bombs. Ravinder Pal, it is said, knew about transistor electronics and knew the formula for making the device. One such formula, written on a piece of paper, was recovered from the pocket of Oberoi. The group had bought transistor shells from a local manu-

facturing shed and made the bombs at Narang's residence.

Earlier, Narang and Oberoi were produced before the metropolitan magistrate R S Mahla on 13 May and were remanded to police custody for a further 14 days. The third suspect, Mohinder Singh Khalsa, was declared dead at the Ram Mohan Lohia Hospital. He had succumbed to injuries in police custody within 24 hours of his arrest on the afternoon of 12 May. The post mortem report (No 1024 dated 14/5/1985) prepared by Dr L T Ramani, says that Mohinder Singh Khalsa, a 32 year old, well built man, died due to haemorrhage and gradual loss of blood. Dr Ramani lists at least 18 injuries on the limbs, the back, the temple and the eyes.

Interestingly, the medico legal case (MLC) at the Lohia Hospital lists only six to seven injuries on Khalsa's body. The earlier MLC, prepared on the day of the arrest when the suspects had been brought to the Lohia Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the scuffle, also puts the number of injuries at around six or seven. But according to Dr Ramani, the MLCs are only of a "general nature" and are not "as

detailed as they should be." The two MLCs before and after Khalsa's death give the impression that there were not many injuries on Khalsa's body after the initial ones on the day of the arrest but the post-mortem report differs. "I do not agree that there were no fresh injuries on Khalsa's body after the encounter at the time of arrest," Dr Ramani said. Although there was no evidence of strangulation or broken bones or burns, as reported in a section of the press, Khalsa had received several blunt blows which had resulted in both external and internal bleeding. Dr Ramani ruled out the possibility of a single injury having caused his death. "It was due to continuous loss of blood and shock," Dr Ramani maintained. Though he could not pinpoint the exact time of death, he felt that Khalsa had died "sometime before" he reached the Lohia Hospital, which was around four in the afternoon. Almost 40 minutes later, the police had reportedly told the metropolitan magistrate, R S Mahla, that the third suspect (Mohinder Singh Khalsa) had gone to the hospital for "treatment."

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

KARNATAKA

Case of the Missing Scientists

Two researchers working on sensitive project leave for USA

When a senior research scientist from the Bangalore based Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) left the country suddenly and virtually 'defected' to the United States late in 1983, the whole episode appeared strange. But LRDE in spite of the sensitive nature of the research it undertakes, survived the scare and the adverse publicity. However a second research scientist involved in a vital project has now left the country abruptly and this has led to a major controversy. The two scientists, Shandas and Ratnakara Rao, who have deserted the country, were both working with the vital LFDR (Low Flying Detection Radar) project. The project itself has been cloaked in controversy from the beginning and the loss of the two scientists to the United States is quite a setback for the LFDR project.

The Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) is a part of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) looking after the needs of the defence services in the field of radar and telecommunication. In tune with this, the LRDE was entrusted with

the task of developing an indigenous Low Flying Radar Detector (LFDR) in the early Seventies ostensibly to track the new generation low flying aircraft. The project was conceived in 1974 at a cost of Rs 55 lakhs, but by 1983, with the project still in the doldrums, the cost had escalated to Rs 25 crores.

Though the project was meant to

be indigenously pursued, the LRDE thought it fit to go in for a collaboration with Space Micro Lab (SML), California, for fabrication of a vital component called Klystron transmitter. This despite the fact that a section of Indian research is thought it was well within the scope of Indian scientists to fabricate the transmitter. It is this shady collaboration that prepared the ground for the subsequent 'defection' of the Indian scientists. While LRDE Bangalore began working on the LFDR project, a senior LRDE scientist, Shandas, was sent to the United States in 1979 to oversee the fabrication of Klystron



The LRDE establishment in Bangalore

transmitters, at the Space Micro Lab (SML), California. The firm failed to keep the time schedule in the collaboration. Yet, Shandas' reports were favourable to SML and as a result, the project, already delayed, suffered further.

Finally, Shandas was summoned back to India in 1983 and asked to explain the delay in the project. His explanations were unconvincing and he was sought to be replaced by someone 'more reliable'. Shandas' passport was confiscated and he was asked not to leave the country. The regional passport offices were also notified of the action taken. Soon afterwards, Shandas applied for leave. In mid August 1983, he left for the United States under mysterious circumstances and the passport was restored to him. He was last seen in the country on 13 August.

LRDE has now confirmed that he is working with SML, California, the same firm he was sent to oversee the collaboration. LRDE took its own time to notify the government of his flight and no missing report was lodged immediately. However, after the story broke, the then defence minister R Venkataraman admitted in the Lok Sabha on 16 December that Shandas had disappeared and that efforts were being made to trace him. The LRDE has since recommended the extradition of Shandas from the US. It is doubtful whether the Shandas who has reportedly set fled down in California with his family will be extradited.

But the LRDE did not tighten up its security after Shandas slipped out. Emboldened by the easy manner in which Shandas left the country and the authorities reacted to such a serious matter, another scientist Y Ratnakar Rao has also left for the United States. Rao went on leave late last year and managed to get it extended on a number of excuses. When further leave was turned down, he applied for medical leave. But when he was asked to appear before a medical board, he sent in his resignation and left India.

Rao's departure also seems meticulously planned. His neighbours in the ITI colony locality where he lived were under the impression that he was away in Hyderabad. Much later, his wife, who had stayed back in Bangalore, began to get telephone calls from United States. Investigating authorities soon got wind of this, but it was too late to do anything. An indication of the cumbersome manner in which such cases are dealt can be had from the fact that the LRDE authorities have only now issued a showcause notice to Ratnakar Rao—by post to his address he last fur-

nished. Only after the letter returns (presumably marked "addressee not found") will the authorities take the next step. Asked if Rao had left for the United States, an LRDE spokesman said wryly "Officially no, unofficially yes."

It would of course be presumptuous to assume that the two scientists who have fled are traitors, without having their versions. But as much as the act of the two scientists is disgraceful, things appear wrong with the LRDE itself. Why, for instance, was a collaboration worked out with SML when it was known that Indian scientists were perfectly capable of fabricating the transmitter? Who benefited from this collaboration? An LRDE spokesman defended the deal saying it was approved by a body of eminent men drawn from various bodies like IISC and other organisations. But the fact remains that ultimately the LRDE used indigenously made transmitters while the SML could not live up to the contract.

The LRDE has also been perceptibly lax in keeping an eye on the scientists. How else could Shandas have got away even after he was recalled and his passport confis-

cated? And how could Ratnakar Rao give the slip so easily in spite of LRDE's experience in the Shandas case? Even now, as the case of the missing scientists causes a furore in defence circles, three LRDE scientists are in the United States having been there for nearly 18 months already. Two of them, Dr Cleetus and Dr Vishwanathan have stood surety for Shandas' passport, the former for Rs 3 lakhs. The scientists are expected back in July.

The sudden departure of the scientist also raised the crucial question of how it affects the IIDR project. Will it hamper work on the air defence systems? A defence ministry spokesman while tacitly admitting that the two scientists have left the country had denied that they were engaged in work of any sensitive nature likely to affect the country's security. But it is well known that both scientists worked under Dr Rajendran who headed the IIDR project team. And about the time of Ratnakar Rao's defect on the indigenously made IIDR, it was successfully tried out in Bangalore. The vital question now is: how much do the missing scientists know?

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

LAW

When Justice Prevailed

The Supreme Court rewards young lawyer for helping railway workers



Anis Suhrawardy

Seldom does the Supreme Court praise the efforts of a lawyer in its judgments. Rarer still are instances when it has directed the government to give cash rewards to a lawyer for the labour he has put in. Anis Suhrawardy, a young Supreme Court lawyer, has been granted both

In a judgment passed on 18 April 1985, Justice D A Desai of the Supreme Court said: "Learned counsel Anis Suhrawardy has put in the maximum labour in making a very useful compilation. He must have spent days and months. The compilation helped us the most in dealing with the writ petitions and the special leave petitions and in ascertaining the proper principle. Such a compilation ought to be rewarded with Rs 5,000 as aid by way of costs to Anis Suhrawardy, advocate, Supreme Court." And if the respect shown to Suhrawardy was unusual, the case and the ruling of the Supreme Court on it was itself out of the ordinary. As a result, of which 2,93,000 workers of the Indian Railways who used to once languish as casual labourers without any employment benefits, have been assured of a better and more certain future.

On 15 January 1983, Inderpal Yadav and 50 other casual labourers engaged by the Northern Railways for duty as *khalasis* at the Tilak

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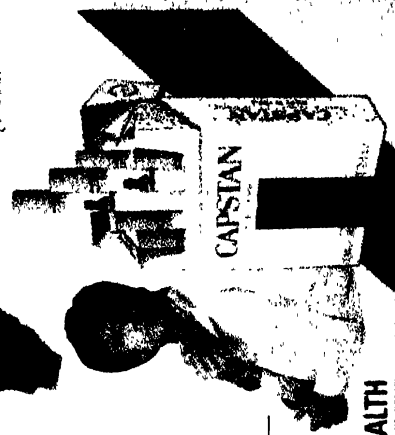
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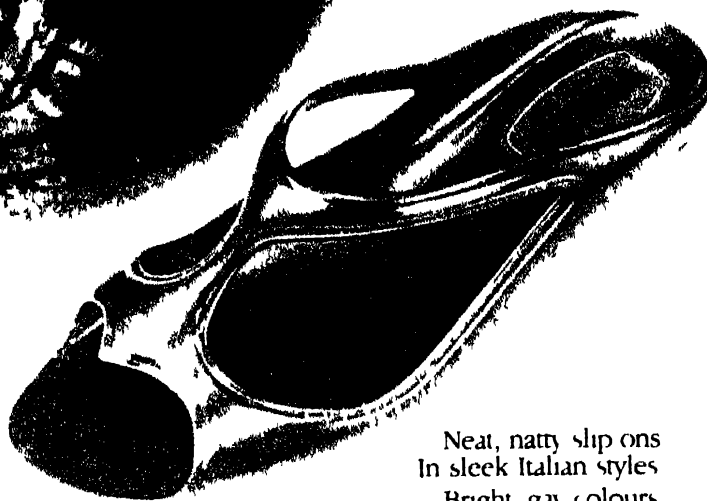
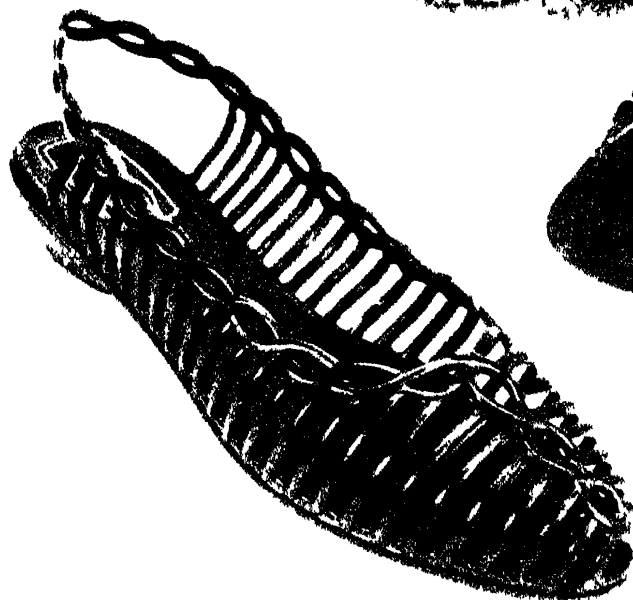


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Bridge railway station in New Delhi came to Suhrawardy and asked him to take up their case. They were suddenly being retrenched from service with effect from 17 January 1983. They had been to several other lawyers but legal opinion had generally been that under Section 25 (F) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, (which the Northern Railways had invoked to remove them from service) the casual labourers had no option but to accept the retrenchment order. But Suhrawardy looked at it from another angle. He first got a stay order from the Supreme Court on 17 January and then filed a petition under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution. He went on, in the petition, to question Section 25(F) of the act itself. He said that the provision was "a pre constitution concept of retrenchment of any workmen employed in any industry for a continuous period of not less than a year, and is moreover ultravires and unconstitutional, violating Articles 14, 16, 39 (1) (D), 41 and 43 of the Indian Constitution and of other directive principles of state policy." In support of this, he stated the conditions under which the casual labourers worked in the railways.

In its retrenchment order which would have affected about 93,000 workers with effect from 17 January 1983, the railways had said that the workers were being asked to go off

duty because of shortage of funds, reduction in the workload and the completion of major workloads. Most of these workers ought to have been granted temporary status after the completion of 120 days of continuous service but were not given that status even though they had been working for the railways for almost a decade. The regular practice of the railways according to some labourers, was to break their service before the completion of 120 days and hire them again so that provision of granting temporary status to them did not apply. In this case, however, there was not even a break in their service. What is more, these labourers, apart from doing railway jobs also had to run errands and do menial household work for the railway inspectors and engineers. All they got in return was a daily wage of Rs 14.75 paise.

In the opening lines of the judgment passed on 18 April 1985, Justice D A Desai said "Articles 41 and 42 of the constitution notwithstanding, there are certain grey areas where the rule of hire and fire is a legacy of *laissez faire*, even in government employment still rules the roost. Casual labour employed on projects also known as 'Project Casual Labour' is one such segment of employment where one may serve for many years and remain a daily rated worker without a weekly off, without any security of service with

out the protection of equal pay for equal work. In short, at the sweet will and mercy of the local satraps."

Anis Suhrawardy, whose clients had grown from 51 to almost an army of 2,097 within months of his having taken up the case, had said in his petition that the railways was the largest employer in the country and it could not in any case act like an agency hiring and firing people whenever it wanted. Accordingly, the Supreme Court ruled that all those who had completed five years of service as on 1 January 1981 be treated as temporary workers of the railways from that date. Those who had completed three years but less than five years of service as on 1 January 1981 would be treated as temporary workers from 1 January 1982. Similar were the directions issued by the Supreme Court for workers who completed 360 days but less than three years of service from 1 January 1981—they would be treated as temporary from 1 January 1983.

A case which in the beginning looked a hopeless one to many a legal expert has become a watershed as far as labourers of the country are concerned. It is a new lease of life for 2,93,000 railway workers and countless others who will be working for the railways in the future.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

New Naval Base

Strong forces to be stationed in the Bay of Bengal

The tiny airstrip at Port Blair lies on the blue green hills where landings, especially during the rains, can be tricky. It was built by the Japanese when they had taken possession of the Andaman and Nicobar islands during the Second World War and few improvements and additions have been made to it since then. Of late, there has been a growing realisation, especially in the defence ministry, of the strategic location of this airstrip.

On 11 May, the naval chief, Admiral R. H. Tahlani, in the presence of defence minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao, inaugurated INS Utkrosh, the third air base of the Indian Navy and its first one on the eastern coast. Speaking at the opening ceremony of INS Utkrosh—a base that would operate Islander class aircraft—defence minister P. V. Narasimha Rao spoke about the possibility of war.

He also mentioned that as natural

resources on land were depleted, nations would begin competing for the wealth of the seas. The Andaman

and Nicobar islands lie in line with the oil bearing basins of Burma to the north and Indonesia to the south east. There could be several areas both onshore and offshore where oil and gas lie untapped. Mud volcanoes associated with oil and gas seepages have been reported from Baratang and the middle Andaman Islands. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission



A recent naval exercise in the Andamans

SPACE PROGRAMME

India's Space Odyssey II

Cosmonaut to be taken aboard the US space shuttle

(ONGC) had chartered offshore drills for carrying out drilling operations in the Andaman and Nicobar islands in 1979-80 and they instantaneously struck gas near Havelock Island in the South Andamans. The ONGC has now formulated plans for intensifying the exploration of oil during the course of the Seventh Plan and Oil India Limited (OIL) is planning to take up searches for petroleum and natural gas in the middle Andamans and on Neil and Havelock islands. If oil is struck, it will not only transform the sagging economy of the far-flung islands but also of the whole country. It all depends, say experts on the commercial viability of the projects.

The strategic importance of the eastern coastline seems to have suddenly dawned, on the defence ministry. The Indian naval presence in the Bay of Bengal indicates it. It is 24 years after the western coast had got its second naval air base (INS Hansa was set up in Goa in 1961) that the east coast has got one. There are plans to strengthen the force even further. In about a year's time the navy will be handed over an airstrip at Vishakhapatnam to be converted into India's fourth naval station. After decades of debates between the air force and the navy, the latter is beginning to strengthen its air arm.

One of the important factors for that is the ideal location of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for use as an operational base in the Bay of Bengal. The presence around these islands would be of strategic importance: the Andamans are not far from the Indian mainland, Lendfall island the northernmost point is 190 kms from Burma and Pygmalion Point, the southern tip is only 146.5 kms away from Sumatra in Indonesia. The distance from the mainland coupled with the inadequate transport and communication links causes major economic problems in the archipelago. Only sometime ago, common salt was unavailable for days on end and the islanders had to do without it.

Over the years there have been demands that a part of the islands be converted into a free-port. The Nicobar Islands lie on an important world trade route between Africa and the Far-East and docking facilities in the islands could ease the pressure on ports like Singapore. A lobby in Port Blair itself has been demanding docking facilities for commercial strips and a free-port for quite sometime now. The matter has been under consideration of the government but the defence ministry opposes the plan.

Sankarshan Thakur, Port Blair

More than a year has passed since Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma of India joined the 'family' of 138 cosmonauts and India became the 14th nation to send a man to space. At the time the historic launch took place, scientists had pointed out that the future of the Indian space programme would depend largely on the successes or failures of the experiments conducted during the joint Indo-Soviet manned space flight. Prior to the flight, Prof. U.R. Rao of the department of space had said that the space flight would not be "a one-shot affair" and would be followed by more Indians entering space, if necessary. Now, an announcement has been made about the second Indian cosmonaut, who would be taken aboard a US space



Rakesh Sharma

shuttle when the Indian satellite INSAT-1C is launched from Cape Kennedy in the middle of 1986.

In the 13 months since Rakesh Sharma's feat, very few details of the experiments conducted by the Indian cosmonaut have been made available. One of the most interesting experiments carried out by Rakesh Sharma was an effort to reduce the impact of the undesirable effects of weightlessness on human beings with the use of yogic exercises. The results of these exercises which, it was said, would be of immense value to the Indian Air Force, are presently being tabulated at the Air Headquarters. A special space cell was set up at Vayu Bhavan for going through the data. With the help of the cosmonaut, IAF officials claim they have

arrived at very substantial conclusions about the usefulness of yogic exercises in space. Both Sharma and his teammate, Ravish Malhotra, involved in the experiments, have been transferred from Air Headquarters after their space mission and have resumed duties as test pilots with the IAF.

The nature of their new assignment is not being disclosed by the air force. "A test pilot is a very valuable asset to the air force, and both Rakesh Sharma and Ravish Malhotra are among the best Indian test pilots. Therefore, after completing their assignment, they have resumed their duties in the normal course of their services," said one senior IAF official. The details of results of the experiments were not ready as yet, he added.

According to scientists of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the two IAF officers have resumed normal duties and have been sent back to flying because all the data collected by them and experiments conducted by Rakesh Sharma during the eight-day space mission have already been handed over to the concerned scientists. The most important experiment conducted by Rakesh Sharma was the ISRO-designed 'terra' remote sensing campaign conducted aboard the Salyut-7. The data of the terra experiment, during which Rakesh Sharma had photographed more than 20 per cent of the Indian territory, are under detailed analysis. The experiments have yielded valuable information on geology, turbidity, and shore-line mapping pertaining to the entire Indian coasts and of the forestry of Gujarat, the Western Ghats region of Karnataka and also on Project Tiger. The ISRO headquarters in Bangalore is also buzzing with activity again: the selection of the second Indian spaceman, this time a civilian, is on. The department has already invited applications from scientists and experts who would be interested in the flight. According to ISRO sources, the response has been overwhelming. Nearly 40 of the applicants (there were over a 100) have been shortlisted. Of these, two persons will finally begin their training in the United States in a few months from now.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

TAMIL NADU

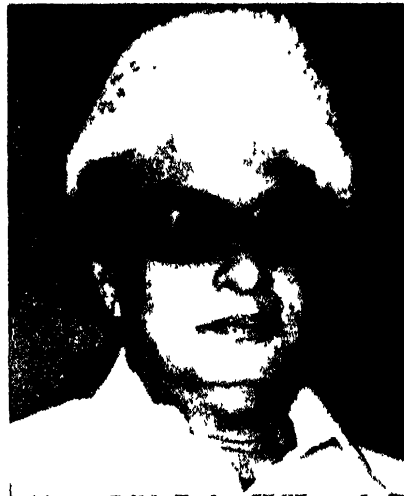
Constitutional Contravention?

Some of MGR's actions alleged to be invalid

Were all the executive actions taken by chief minister M.G. Ramachandran in the absence of a council of ministers for four days from 10 to 14 February constitutionally valid? Yes, says the Madras High Court (MHC). No, says Mr L. Krishnaswami Bharati, one of the founding fathers of the Constitution of India. Two petitions were filed before the MHC by Sadiq Pasha, MLC, treasurer of the DMK and R. Dalavai convener of the Civil Liberties Union challenging the executive actions of MGR. Though MGR was sworn in as CM on 10 February, four days lapsed before his council of ministers were sworn in. The petitioners contended that under Article 163 of the Constitution, no executive action could be taken by the CM in the absence of a council of ministers.

The MHC however, upheld the constitutional validity of all executive actions taken by the CM during this interregnum. The bench comprising Chief Justice M.N. Chandurkar and Justice T. Sathiaddev observed that the constitutional provisions could be construed to mean that the CM should have some time from the date of his appointment as CM to decide the composition of his council of ministers. It was pointed out that the time lag between the appointment of the CM and the council of ministers was implicit in the parliamentary form of democracy and the cabinet form of government which India has adopted. Article 164(1) provides for the appointment of other ministers in the council by the Governor on the advice of the CM. As the leader of the majority party the chief minister had to obviously weigh several considerations before forming a cabinet. This was a time consuming process, the bench averred. The petitioners had contended that if the decisions taken by the CM during the absence of a council of ministers were validated, it would mean giving him constitutional sanction to function for an unlimited period of time without a council of ministers. The judges countered this with the argument that if the CM did not submit the list of the council of ministers within a "reasonable time" which the Governor grants, the latter cannot be said to be "helpless in the matter." Another point that the petitioners raised was that Rule five of the

business rules which authorised the Governor to allot portfolios to the ministers would come into operation only after the ministers were appointed. The judges held that the residuary clause in the business rules clearly authorised the CM to exercise executive powers. Therefore, there was no constitutional infirmity in the CM asking the chief secretary to submit to him files requiring urgent disposal. As to the contention that there should be at least one minister other than the CM to head a government, the judges held that in a parliamentary form of government it was permissible to have ministers without portfolio. In any case there were any number of precedents. Between 1977 and 1985, there were 14 instances when chief ministers of



M. G. Ramachandran

several states had been sworn in first and the council of ministers a few days later.

But Krishnaswami Bharati differs with the judgment. He admits that what he has to say has no relevance as the judgment is binding. The bench declined to grant leave to the petitioner Sadiq Pasha to appear before the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, Bharati feels compelled to express his considered opinion to see that "the rule of law in our constitution is upheld." Referring to the bench's statement that the CM can perform his executive functions under business rules, Bharati points out in a letter published in *The Hindu*: "A legitimate question may be asked whether the CM can begin

to function at all without allocation of portfolios by the Governor under Rule five of the business rules. The residuary clause in the business rules authorising the CM to exercise executive powers is obviously available only when the authorised council of ministers under Article 163(1) comes into existence and surely not when the CM alone was the sole monarch of all he surveyed between 10 to 14 February. The CM was not allotted portfolios on 10 February. Without allocation of portfolios to the CM by the Governor, could the CM begin to exercise his executive powers at all?"

According to Bharati, Article 164 is brought in by their lordships to "dilute" the mandatory nature of Article 163(1)—"they (the judges) have not squarely faced this question and answered it." Article 163(1) states "There shall be a council of ministers with the chief minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions." Regarding the suggestion that a time lag for the appointment of the council of ministers is necessarily implied in Article 164, Bharati states "The time lag is trivial as the CM is expected to have the list of at least one minister (after all we don't want all the names) in his pocket so that a council of ministers, in terms of Article 163(1) comes into existence at once."

Bharati goes on to say "Let it not be understood that I am denying the right of the Governor to appoint the CM under Article 164. He has every right to do so. But if it is not simultaneously followed by the appointment of at least one minister so as to constitute a council of ministers, the CM is a dummy who cannot move his little finger in the administration of the state. The crux of the matter rests on two questions. Firstly, was there a council of ministers with the CM at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions between 10 and 14 February. There was no exercise of his functions between 10 and 14 February with the CM alone in the picture. Secondly, can there be a government without a council of ministers under Article 163(1)? Bharati concludes by stating "with due deference to their lordships it is my humble but considered view that since there was no council of ministers under Article 163 between 10 and 14 February, there was no government or administration during the interregnum in the constitutional sense and any action taken by the CM has no constitutional validity."

Anita Pratap, Madras

UTTAR PRADESH

Midnight Massacre

Police suspect family members

The hamlet of Hiralal ka Purwa in Bah tehsil of Agra district consists of two houses—one big, pucca structure owned by Harnarayan, a well-to-do landlord, and his five brothers, and the other, a thatched hut at the edge of Harnarayan's land, belonging to Baburam and his son, Khuman. On the night of 1 May, half the hamlet's population were massacred. Ten members of Harnarayan's family, including Harnarayan himself, one of his brothers, both their wives, and all their children were killed. As yet, the identity of the killers and their motives are unknown.

Neither is anyone very clear about what exactly happened that night. Vasudev, one of the surviving brothers, says Harnarayan was sleeping outside, at some distance from the house, while the rest of the family was lying about the courtyard and the terrace. Suddenly, at about midnight, 10 or 15 armed men swarmed into the house and began shooting at whoever they saw. One of the men tripped while trying to shoot Vasudev, prompting the latter to attempt to snatch his rifle. A scuffle ensued, in the course of which both men fell from the terrace onto a grassy bank below, from where Vasudev was able to escape.

Another brother, Pappu, also escaped by jumping from the roof and rushing to Khuman's hut. The other family members who survived were those who were not staying there that night. The second brother, Brahm Lal, and his wife, were visiting his in-laws, and Vasudev's wife, infant son, mother and youngest brother, Mahesh, were spending the night at the family's house in Bah.

Even those who were in the neighbourhood that night are not aware of what happened. Khuman, who was working his thresher barely 500 metres from the house, first realised something was amiss when a hysterical Pappu crawled up to him at about 3.30 am. He says he did not hear any gunshots as the thresher was making too much noise. Other farmers working a thresher at the same distance on the opposite side of the house, learnt of the incident only when Vasudev limped up to them.

Inmates of Marhepura village, a kilometre away, heard about the killing early in the morning when the

farmers passed by carrying Vasudev, who had injured his leg during his fall, to Bah. They had not heard anything either, apart from the sound of threshers and crackers which had been burst throughout the night in neighbouring villages where weddings were taking place. Strangely, not a single person seems to have seen any gang heading for or later escaping from the house. Who were the killers? Initially, dacoits were suspected. The Bah area is a part of the Chambal region, and district officials, after an initial visit to the spot, presumptuously told local reporters that the dacoits were responsible. That made frontpage news all over the country, and brought top police



Vasudev: the prime suspect

officers from Agra and Lucknow rushing to the spot.

The theory doing the rounds was that it was the handiwork of the notorious Jagta Kachhi gang. It made sense, for not only did the murderers loot the house after killing the inmates, but also because Jagta had a grudge against Vasudev. About three years ago, Vasudev had been kidnapped by Jagta, but he managed to escape in dramatic fashion by overpowering his guard and allegedly killing him. (Vasudev denies killing the guard). What did not make sense, however, was the fact that most of Jagta's gang, including Jagta himself, were liquidated by the police in May 1982, a fact confirmed by villagers throughout the area. The only

dacoit gang active in Agra at present is Bare Lala's, but then that is a Brahmin gang and this was a Brahmin family, and dacoits maintain their codes. Moreover, dacoits do not kill children. And, most significant, dacoits do not enter a village surreptitiously nor are villagers shy of admitting that they saw a dacoit gang. Yet here, eyewitnesses are strangely absent.

The other theory put forward is that the killings were a case of vendetta because of a land dispute. The brothers had a dispute over a small piece of land with some Mallah families, and matters had reached a flash-point some months ago when Baburam, one of those killed, roughed up a ten-year-old girl who was gathering pulses from it. But he had not done anything that could have provoked such a macabre reprisal. Senior police officers say they do have a plausible theory which they will not immediately reveal. However, a member of the investigating team present at the spot provided some hints, by merely drawing attention to some facts. These were that Harnarayan was the undisputed head of the family and (in the words of his brother-in-law to SUNDAY) was like the landlord while his brothers were like labourers. The family's property, 25 bighas plus all the farm machinery were in Harnarayan's name, 39 bighas jointly in the name of the other five brothers, and the rest in the name of all six. Vasudev is now automatically head of the family, and his little son becomes the only, and will perhaps be the eldest heir. (Vasudev's only surviving elder brother, Brahm Lal, is considered an idiot, and has no children despite being married 11 years ago.) The policeman also pointed out that both of Vasudev's escapes—from the dacoits three years ago, and in the present instance, have been rather uncanny and that he is rather intelligent and shrewd.

The officer also came up with more facts. It appears that the police believe that Vasudev, who cannot be more than 25, cold-bloodedly called in his "dacoit connections" to liquidate all those in his family who could stand in the way of his, and later, his son, becoming the sole owner of the family wealth. Was Vasudev jealous of his eldest brother's power, and driven to this step by his tyranny? The truth is too indiscernible at present and no conclusions are possible. But the police are apparently convinced and Vasudev and his two younger brothers, Pappu and Mahesh, both teenagers, have been arrested.

A Special Correspondent, Lucknow

NEW DELHI

A Planned Ghetto?

The DDA's blueprint for the city under heavy criticism

A master plan for any city plays a role similar to that of a constitution of a country. Delhi was the first metropolitan city to have a master plan for the proposed development and expansion. The master plan was prepared envisaging planned de-

velopment of the capital between 1961 and 1984. The task of implementation was handed over to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the largest real estate developing agency in the world. The DDA, however, has permitted gross

violations of the plan and has failed to achieve more than 50 per cent of its objectives. Now, with the completion of the first phase period of the plan, the DDA has prepared a second plan which will take the capital further into what has been called "the planned chaos of Delhi."

The DDA is in fact shy of calling the new set of proposals prepared by it as a second master plan for Delhi. The plan, named the New Perspective Plan has been limited to a list of modifications because of a defect in the legislation under which the first plan was passed. Section 7 (1) of the DDA Act, 1957 makes provisions for the revision and modification of the plan not for a second master plan. Even after criticism from various quarters on the shortsightedness of the plan and the urgent need for amendment in the DDA Act, the Perspective Plan makes no such demand. As a result, the proposals are likely to meet the same fate as those in the original document: that of non-implementation and non-execution.

The Perspective Plan has been the subject of debate ever since it was released by the DDA. It was tabled before the metropolitan council on 15 February with 12 pages missing and names of two elected members on the DDA Advisory Committee omitted. The missing pages and names caused a furore in the council and the plan was strongly condemned by the leader of the opposition in the council, Madan Lal Khurana. Says Khurana now: "The plan has been prepared by a development mafia in the DDA. Why has no planning expert or elected member competent on the subject been involved in its preparation?" That the planning function of the DDA has been undermined and that the DDA was not singularly capable of both planning and executing the master plan were pointed out by experts and architects.

The DDA continues to be over-ambitious in spite of the declared failure to achieve the targets of the first plan. There is a yawning gap in the targets DDA set for itself and the results it has shown. Instead of the 4.5 lakh dwelling units to be built by it in the first plan period, it has constructed only 86,000 units. The latest approved plan is for constructing dwelling units measuring between 20-25 sq. ft. Such units will only further the DDA's reputation of making the city into a planned ghetto. There are other examples. Instead of the 40,000 acres of land to be acquired by the DDA till 1984, only 11,050 acres have been acquired. Instead of the 29,800 acres to be

HEALTH

The Right to Know

Consumers can play a crucial role in getting their governments to adopt rational and meaningful health policies. This is a central theme in a new booklet, *Drugs and World Health: An International Consumer Perspective* (1984), published by the Health Action International (HAI). Written by Charles Medawar (of social audit fame), whose earlier exposes on MNC drug policies have hit world headlines, this little layman's handbook spells out how ordinary people (the ones at the receiving end of health and drug policies) can exercise vigilance and compel the powerful combine of the business-medical-government establishment to implement drug policies truly aimed at achieving "health for all."

Summarising the basis of the world health-and-drugs scene, Medawar says that restricting drug production to the 200-odd in the WHO essential drugs list, should be the first step. "Health for all depends on fewer drugs being used less often." Stressing the consumer's 'right to know,' as the basis for all health action, the author writes: "Policies which encourage consumers (individually or collectively) to make better use of medicines uphold several basic democratic rights." These include the right to health, to information, to protection from malpractices, and participation in decision making. A patient's 'informed consent' to treatment means a right to information about drugs and their side-effects, which is often withheld or distorted. Conceding that direct responsibility for the appropriate use of medicines rests mainly with health care professionals, government and drug firms, Medawar insists that consumers can and should

"check, test and stimulate decision-making done in their name."

The booklet gives a checklist of 'questions to doctors' to which answers are the patients' right—what and how, how important, what side-effects and how long? The health movement of the 1980s, has already demanded this right to informed self-care and drug information and aims at breaking down the present elitist preserve of information. However, patients have traditionally been discouraged from asking questions—which is the reason why they are ill-informed. Prescribers have held on to their so-called 'clinical freedom' which means the right not to have to explain or justify what drugs they prescribe and why. How then would consumers be able to fulfil their right to know?

This is where organisations like HAI come in. The HAI is part of the International Organisations of Consumer Unions which initiates research and action on issues like drugs, pesticides, baby foods etc, and argues the consumer's case. The HAI lobbied actively on the essential drugs issue at the last World Health Assembly in Geneva and is currently engaged in creating awareness and initiatives for implementing basic drugs policies in all Third World countries. The present booklet is part of this effort to de-mystify medical knowledge and to make the basic drugs movement a truly people's movement. This, incidentally is very much in tune with the WHO's own statement that people have both a right and duty to participate in the planning and implementation of health care programmes.

Vimal Balasubrahmanyam,
Secunderabad

BHUTAN

Still Good Friends

But India is no longer the only friend

developed, a mere 16,000 acres have been developed.

In some respects, the DDA has been the worst enemy of the master plan. It has allowed, even encouraged violations of the master plan and alterations of the land use of prize real estate. Interestingly, the headquarters of the DDA, is itself an example of such violations. The 20-storeyed building allegedly exceeds the floor area ratio permissible in the zone. It also lacks the required clearance for fire and safety. The Indraprastha power station, which is largely responsible for making Delhi one of the three most polluted capitals of the world is still not shown in the second plan as a power station.

The DDA has permitted the "land use" for several hotel projects (including Hotel Meridian) to be changed from residential to commercial. Hundreds of acres of land marked "green" in the master plan have been acquired and construction started. Retired government officials, bureaucrats and prominent politicians own farm houses on this land. The DDA has turned a deaf ear to all protests and no cognisance has been taken of this fact even in the second Perspective Plan.

"The DDA has failed to learn from the mistakes it made in the first plan and is taking Delhi towards a trauma of development," said Sayed Sahfi, former chief planner and a UN expert on town planning. He pointed out that the DDA which does not have a planning member on its staff has proposed in its Perspective Plan some modifications without taking note of the lacunae of the first—the Institute of Town and Country Planning had, according to him, advocated a review of the master plan in February 1973 but the report was never examined by the government. Other reports, including one of the Estimates Committee of Parliament have suggested suitable modifications of the plan, but the DDA had independently made its decisions. The Perspective Plan has proposals like reintroducing tram services in the walled city and the construction of a large slaughter house in the crowded Shahadra colony. The plan is to be passed by the works and housing ministry soon after the DDA has examined all the objections put up by the public on the proposed plan, presently on display at Vikas Minar. Modifications in the plan are likely to be made in the Perspective Plan before it is finalised. But whatever be the changes, the new plan for Delhi will hardly be the best way of planning the capital.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

During his recent trip to Delhi, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk stated categorically that relations between India and his kingdom were "ideal." King Jigme emphasised that the two neighbours shared "complete understanding and trust on all issues of mutual concern and interest." The King also recalled the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's memorable trek to Bhutan in 1958 from which time Bhutan began its efforts towards modernisation. It was Nehru's support and encouragement which made Bhutan's planned economic development possible.

However, unlike the past when the kingdom's internal politics and international policies were identical with India's, there has been a change in the nation's attitudes. There has begun a search for an identity, which



King Jigme Singye Wangchuk

reflects a nation's self-confidence and sophistication. "We know what we want and we know how to get it" is the message Thimpu is now getting across. The major point the kingdom now stresses is that "yesterday's equations" are no longer relevant and it prefers to open as many windows to the world as it feels necessary.

The regime's attitude towards the 1949 Indo-Bhutan treaty of perpetual peace and friendship is a pointer. Under the treaty's terms, Bhutan enjoys complete freedom in internal matters but is obliged to act on India's advice regarding the conduct of international affairs. At the time of Nehru's visit to Paro, in Bhutan, it was understood that "while India would protect her (Bhutan's) internal independence, she could not be inde-

pendent in the international sense of the term." The Himalayan kingdom now appears to be taking a different view of the issue.

Bhutan's continual dialogues with China in an effort to get the border question resolved are a significant point. The 1949 treaty evidently does not offer the kingdom any scope for such initiatives in matters of foreign policy. But such dialogues lend credence to the report that it no longer holds the 1949 treaty as sacrosanct as the previous regimes did. Though Bhutan has not made such a statement, it is believed that she is interested in a revision of the 1949 Indo-Bhutan treaty. Indeed, New Delhi is in for an unpleasant surprise if it believes that Thimpu still welcomes the 1949 treaty as the most effective guarantee of its sovereignty.

The Bhutanese government's thinking about its economic development also places in perspective its understanding of its expectations from India. For instance, the kingdom's Fifth Six-year Plan (1981-87) aims at a total expenditure of Rs 433.8 crores, of which India is committed to contribute Rs 134 crores. It may be recalled that India bore the entire financial burden of the kingdom's First Six-year Plan. Over 75 per cent of the finances for the next three plans were put up by India. Again, the message is clear: Bhutan can fend for itself.

As the Fifth Plan explained, "the reduction in the quantum of India's contribution to the Fifth Plan was to be expected as more and more international donors are likely to contribute to Bhutan's development efforts besides the increase in its own internal resources." Nearly 43 per cent of the plan's projected expenditure will be provided as aid by Australia, Japan, Switzerland, 13 multinational aid agencies and two voluntary organisations, a fact which disproves that Bhutan is reconciled to its 1949 treaty.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that King Jigme was less than forthright when he observed in May 1983 that his kingdom "did not want diplomatic over-extension just for the sake of it." For, he made it clear that Bhutan would be looking for "those ties that were helpful and necessary."

Bhole Chatterjee, Calcutta

Useful Role

Of the three filmstars who were elected to Parliament last December, only one seems keen to make her presence felt. At the two-day AICC(I) meeting held in New Delhi on 4 and 5 May, it was Vyjayanthimala Bali, the Congress(I) MP from Madras, who stole the thunder, while both Amitabh Bachchan and Sunil Dutt, the party MPs from Allahabad and Bombay South, were conspicuous by their absence. Dutt pleaded "other engagements" in his constituency and Bachchan, who was supposed to attend the second day's proceedings, disappointed his admirers by not showing up at all. But the presence of the glamorous actress-turned-MP was consolation enough. Congress workers followed her around and besieged her for autographs. Eventually, there were unruly scenes every now and



Vyjayanthimala Bali

then partymen hunting for autographs had to be shooed away from the enclosure inside Talkatora Stadium where she was sitting. Mrs Bali has proved herself, too. After five months as a parliamentarian, politicians of both the ruling party and opposition are impressed with her abilities as a debater. Messrs Dutt and Bachchan, on the other hand, have been comparatively silent on the floor of the house.

Justice for All

There was nothing unexpected about Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati's elevation to the highest seat of justice in the world's largest democracy; even before he was appointed the 'Chief Justice designate' of the Supreme Court, many had known him to be the natural choice for the honoured post. Justice Bhagwati's appointment comes as the climax of an illustrious career in the bar and then the bench. After practising for long in Bombay, in July 1960 he became a judge and in 1967 Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court before coming to the Supreme Court in 1973. Justice Bhagwati's elevation is significant because of his interest in using the law to the advantage of the poor and downtrodden. Since his recent judgements have also shown him to be against the death penalty,



Chief Justice Bhagwati

it would be interesting to see how he deals with the trial for the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. Justice Bhagwati is also known to be against the arbitrary transfer of judges and was responsible for introducing the system of socio-legal investigations (like the famous inquiry into the conditions of bonded labour in the country). But his unique gift to India's judicial system is the practice of hearing cases on mere letters of complaint.

True Grit

Shocked disbelief was the instant reaction of Flying Officer Hari Kumar, 24, when he discovered that the throttle of the IAF Ajeet fighter to which he was strapped, thousands of feet up in the air, had shut. Suddenly, it was obvious: he had an engine failure. Was there anything he could do at all? The answer Hari gave himself in the face of this impending disaster made the split second difference between survival and catastrophe. The next moment, the officer's rigorous training at the IAF's ninth squadron took charge and his reflexes built up on the lessons he had learnt in combat-oriented control: he had to fly a disabled aircraft with a dead engine.

Ejection from the crippled aircraft would have been the easiest decision at that moment. But as he was flying over a densely populated area, Hari ruled it out. Bailing out would



Flying Officer Hari Kumar

have also meant the abandonment and destruction of the precious fighter. Hari coaxed the defective machine slowly on to the runway. A few excruciating minutes later he was spotted by the Jamnagar base air traffic control tower, which had been informed of the emergency situation. Hari jumped triumphantly from the cockpit and looked back at the fighter he had just saved in a daring battle with death.

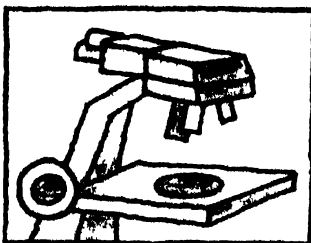
Author Extraordinary

The plane from the United States landed at dawn and by 6.00 am writer-philosopher Raja Rao (*The Serpent and the Rope*, *The Cat and Shakespeare*, *Kanthapura*) was strolling in Lodhi Gardens. He could have been in a time machine: "I felt the atmosphere of the *Mahabharata*; India has not changed for the last 4,000 years." The writer, now based in Texas after decades in Paris, is an annual visitor to India. This time he has come with a heavy brown man's burden: his three-volume novel. The first volume called *The Chess Master and his Moves* is 850 pages long. The second and third volumes are: *Daughter of the Mountain* and *A Myrobalan in the Palm of your Hand*. This magnum opus — 30 years in the making — is inspired by the bril-

liant mathematician Ramanujan. However, it also has the fragrance and gist of Raja Rao's life. The author has placed himself at the junction where physics and philosophy bump into each other: There are encounters between and a Brahmin a rabbi, between an Algerian revolutionary and a Gandhian. Rao, ever-elegant with tapering slim fingers and eyes which gaze unblinkingly, comes with the message that "the West is sinking." Gandhism is the only hope, and India the only hope for the future as the other gods, communism and capitalism have failed. Metaphysics apart, the author is known for his views on the western woman: "America is full of women who are half-women and half-men hence the confusion: war is caused by unfulfilled men and women."

Microscope That Sees Atoms

And now a microscope that can even see atoms. In the United States, a new microscope capable of magnifying an object 300 million times is giving scientists the first view of the atoms that make up the surface of ordinary objects. The instrument uses a newly discovered phenomenon, electron tunneling, to make a picture of surface topography in such detail that every atom is a blurred ball or a bump. "What we're seeing is absolutely remarkable," said Gerd Binnig, one of the developers of the method at the IBM Zurich Research Laboratory, where the first devices were built.



A Dangerous Habit

Marijuana is very harmful for the reproductive system. It particularly affects the offspring of pregnant women who smoke it. According to Dr Amarendra Kumar of Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, USA, "Smoking marijuana during pregnancy might cause irreversible damage to those cells in the (foetus) brain which control the female gonads." In an experiment, Dr Kumar gave newborn female rats the equivalent of two to 20 marijuana cigarettes' worth of tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, marijuana's active ingredient, during each of their first five days of life. The rats never developed normal female cycles and at ten months they had abnormally low levels of a chemical that triggers the pituitary gland to help make ovaries produce eggs. In another research, Syed Hussain at the University of North Dakota found that the THC equivalent of as few as two and a half marijuana cigarettes a day for 15 days damaged the processing of energy rich sugars in the testicles of young adult male rats.

Life-saving Technique

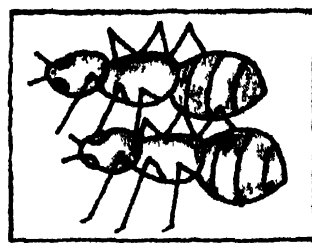
Doctors in Northern Ireland have discovered that it is possible to assess a premature baby's chances of survival by listening to its heartbeats during the first few hours of life. The present test programme, due to be completed in three years' time, will help in identifying babies at risk within three hours of their birth.

All healthy human hearts have a variation in beats. If the beat rate is too regular this is usually a danger sign. But special equipment is required to measure this variability. Amplified sensors are placed on the chests of the premature babies as they lie in their incubators. These are connected to a recorder. The heart rates are recorded on a 24 hour cassette tape and then fed into a mini computer which translates the pattern of the heart beat variation. From this the medical team can quickly tell if a baby is suffering from respiratory disease and take remedial action.



Clever Ants

Large black ants that live around Bangalore have hit upon an ingenious device of harvesting dew, according to a Harvard scientist, Mark W. Moffett. The five hot months of the year pass with hardly any rain. Light dew often forms early in the morning but evaporates in one to three hours. Around the entrances of the underground colonies the ants pile feathers and dead ants. At night, considerable moisture condenses in the piles. As they leave the nest for their daily work, the ants spend two to 15 minutes sipping from this reservoir.



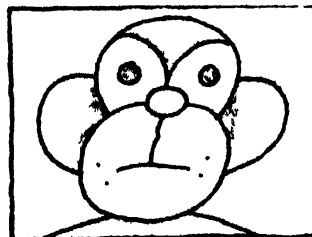
Lucina: The Asteroid With a Moon

A research in France has shattered a long standing belief in astronomy. It was previously thought that only planets had moons. Now, it seems, the asteroid Lucina, an object only 150 kms across, also has a tiny moon. The observations made at the Meudon Observatory in France indicate that the moon is about 5.7 km in diameter, about the size of central Paris. The astronomers Jean Arlot and his colleagues observed it while attempting to monitor the passage of Lucina over the face of a distant star which it was expected to shadow. But the shadow did not pass over Meudon, it followed a line running roughly west to east through Lisbon, Barcelona and just north of Rome. Nevertheless, the Meudon astronomers did see an occultation of the star two minutes after the main body passed over observatories in Spain.

Chimpanzees Can Count Too

In Japan a five year old chimpanzee has been taught to count. According to an account of his work in *Nature*, Dr Tetsuro Matsuzawa of the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University, Japan, trained the chimpanzee called Ai to use Arabic numerals to name the number of items which were shown to it in a display window. The ape identified the objects by a set of illuminated keys on a keyboard connected to a computer system. Dr Matsuzawa states that the animal successfully identified six Arabic numbers by selecting from the keyboard the numeral that was appropriate to the number of objects it was shown. In addition the chimpanzee provided the appropriate colour name and category label for some 300 sample types.

In the experiment, a researcher presented a sample of items to the ape in the display window, for example, three red pencils. A switch was also pressed to light a set of numeric keys on the keyboard. Correct and incorrect choices were followed by different sounds, and a reward of a piece of apple or raisin for a correct selection.



VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 26 MAY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) A week of mixed fortunes lies ahead of you. On the professional front some of your colleagues will be working to embarrass you. You will also incur the displeasure of your superiors. Exercise restraint in dealing with such a situation. Your deteriorating health will add to your worries. However, this is a good period for lovers. This is also the ideal time to settle legal disputes.

Good dates 30, 31 and 1

Lucky numbers 1, 3 and 4

Favourable direction South west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) The period is particularly good for professionals and businessmen. Do not waste time on socialising and push your efforts to the utmost. Students will also benefit from this lucky phase. A pleasant trip that you were looking forward to is in the offing. However, the domestic front will cause concern. The financial front is equally disheartening; you may have to borrow money.

Good dates 26, 27 and 28

Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 11

Favourable direction North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a lucky week for those in love and intending to get married. Your financial prospects look bright but do not waste money on friends. This week you will come in contact with an influential person. Do not hesitate to seek favours. A legal dispute which was bothering you will be solved in your favour. But those above the age of 45 should be careful about their health and diet.

Good dates 28, 29 and 30

Lucky numbers 4, 5 and 7

Favourable direction East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is not a bad week for professionals but they should desist from taking hasty decisions regarding their career. Businessmen should be wary of deception. Artists and writers will prosper during this phase. The domestic and financial front will not cause concern. The period is also favourable for love and matrimonial negotiations. Your health will improve markedly but avoid spicy food.

Good dates 26, 28 and 30

Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 9

Favourable direction South



LEO (15 August—14 September) The week is extremely lucky for those in service. A promotion or a posting to a place of your choice cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will also bag lucrative deals this week. Students are advised to make full use of the opportunities that come their way. The domestic front will remain peaceful and your financial prospects will look up. But do not neglect your health or diet.

Good dates 27, 29 and 31

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 7

Favourable direction West



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) The stars are not in your favour this week. Be on your guard and deal with people diplomatically. Although the health of your wife or children will bother you, the financial front will add to your worries. This is also a bleak period for lovers. Postpone marriage plans. Most of your efforts will be frustrated by friends and relatives. Avoid undertaking journeys this week.

Good dates 27, 30 and 31

Lucky numbers 1, 5 and 6

Favourable direction South east



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Parties and social engagements will keep you occupied this week but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health. Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. Success is in store for sportsmen too. The domestic and financial front will remain inspiring. Your health will improve. But this is not a very bright week for lovers.

Good dates 26, 27 and 30

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 5

Favourable direction North west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Creative artists, writers and sportsmen will find this period favourable. If you have legal problems pertaining to property, this is the ideal time to pursue them. A short trip towards the middle of the week is in the offing. However, this is not a good phase for servicemen. Businessmen should avoid undertaking financially risky ventures. Watch your health closely.

Good dates 29, 31 and 1

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 5

Favourable direction East



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a lucky week particularly for students. Some of you may get chances to study abroad or in reputed institutions. Those employed in the public sector will also find this period favourable. But this is not a good week for businessmen; you may lose heavily if you are careless. Lovers are advised to avoid unnecessary tiffs. Keep a sharp eye on your health.

Good dates 27, 28 and 29

Lucky numbers 1, 6 and 7

Favourable direction South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Success on all fronts is a certainty for you this week. Professionals will make steady headway while businessmen will bag lucrative contracts. On the financial front gains through unexpected sources are indicated. At home your children will come out with 'ying' colours in competitions giving you a lot of pleasure. This is also the ideal time for love and marriage negotiations.

Good dates 26, 30 and 31

Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 8

Favourable direction North east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Consult a doctor at the slightest indication of illness. Negligence may lead to complications. Lovers will find this week disappointing; consult elders before taking crucial decisions. However, students will find this period favourable. The phase is equally exciting for businessmen and professionals. A letter will bring good tidings.

Good dates 27, 31 and 1

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 8

Favourable direction West



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Despite losses on the financial front, businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. Sportsmen and writers will be rewarded for their dedication. The domestic front will remain inspiring. A short trip is in the offing. A pleasant surprise awaits you at the end of the week. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. But keep a vigilant eye on your health and diet.

Good dates 26, 29 and 1

Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9

Favourable direction North

For those born between 15 April and 14 May

You are spirited and enthusiastic in your approach. New thoughts and schemes excite you and you have a strong desire to explore the unknown. You do not hesitate to undertake challenging assignments but you have very little patience. Unexpected hurry to achieve the desired results frustrates most of your efforts. Most of you are also socially natured and you love to be surrounded by friends and relatives. Women born during this period are usually adventurous and they hate to live a cloistered life.

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CALICUT: Three tipsy tuskers danced their hearts out on the Nilambur Gudalur main road at Nadukanichuram on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border on 1 May blocking traffic for a time. The wild tuskers were drunk with illicit arrack stored by a bootlegger in the adjoining forest. A Tamil Nadu state excise party led by the Gudalur excise inspector, Mr Dharmaraj, had raided an illicit liquor den at Nadukanichuram and arrested Antony, a bootlegger. Antony led the party inside the adjoining forest where he had stored the illicit stuff he made. As the excise men were examining the unearthed stocks, the three tuskers suddenly arrived on the scene. The police fled for their lives with the arrested bootlegger abandoning their jeep and 12 tins of the illicit brew. The tuskers, who had their fill of wine, were soon on the road dancing in high spirits bringing traffic to a standstill. By the time the excise party returned from Gudalur town with reinforcements the revelry on the road had moved to the darkness of the deep jungles. The excisemen who went back to recover the liquor found that the wild revellers had consumed 11 tins of the illicit liquor—*Indian Express* (C.S. Bhimasena Rao, Guwahati)

BANGALORE: The residents watched in disbelief when the cabinet minister in charge of urban development, Mr Lakshmisagar, accompanied by the city mayor, Mr M. L. Subburaj and armed with broomsticks, swept the streets of Mahalakshmiapuram here on 5 May. The programme, undertaken at the instance of the minister, who is also in charge of law and parliamentary affairs, attracted the attention of passers-by and soon a crowd collected. After sweeping the streets for a couple

of minutes he exhorted the residents to voluntarily engage themselves in the "keep the city clean drive." The occasion was the celebration of the first anniversary of the Clean India Campaign being promoted by the Bangalore based Krishi Samskriti Vidyakendra—*The Hindu* (C. S. N. Murty, Bangalore)

KAMPUR: Believe it or not, but according to one person at least the month of February in the years 1966, 1967 and 1968 was of 30 or 31 days. The headmaster of the Bahakabari high school, Kampur, in his statement forms of some of his candidates mentioned the dates of birth as 30-2-66, 29-2-67, 30-2-68 and so on. And according to the admit cards issued by the officer-in-charge, HSLC examination, Kampur centre, the dates of birth are also shown as forwarded by the headmaster of the Bahakabari high school. According to this version, the year 1967 was a leap year—*The Assam Tribune* (Jiten Das, Goalpara)

UDHAGAMANDALAM: Twenty college students from Pondicherry were put to shame for eve-teasing at the Government Botanical Garden here. The students misbehaved with women tourists who had come in large numbers. Mr S. Ramanathan, superintendent of police, Nilgiris, sent his men to round up the students. The delinquents begged of the SP not to charge-sheet them. However, determined to teach them a lesson, the SP made them march under police escort from the garden to Brecks school grounds, shouting, "We will not behave in a disorderly manner in future, we will not indulge in eve-teasing and we will not cause nuisance to the public." A large number of tourists at the garden and on the roads had a hearty laugh—*The Hindu* (Kanga Gengaimuthu, Aruppukottai)

NEW DELHI: A pictorial album of the presidents of the Congress party released on 5 May, on the eve of the inauguration of the party's centenary, has at least three shocking bloomers. A picture of Pattabhi Sitaramayya has been captioned as K. Kamaraj. Jawaharlal Nehru has been credited with two terms as president while he was actually president thrice, 1929-31, 1935-37 and 1951-55. Mr Kamlapati Tripathi is missing from the galaxy of presidents. He was for a brief period the president in 1978 after Mr B. Brahmananda Reddy. The album has been published by the Articles and Publication Division of the AICC(I)—*Deccan Herald* (N. Mohan, Bangalore)

WITHOUT COMMENT

If they want to build 24 storeys, they are welcome to do it, provided the municipal laws permit it—Rajiv Gandhi, asserting that the SGPC was welcome to demolish and rebuild the Akal Takht

As far as Bengal is concerned, you need a lot of philosophy—Arun Nehru in *The Telegraph*

There should be a separate Parliament for Bengal—Lalit Maken

To me he (Rajiv Gandhi) seems like a one-word wonder, a wordless speechless wonder because he never seems to have anything to say—Rani Jethmalani in *Savvy*

Small irritations can always be removed—Baba Joginder Singh, on the resignations of Sant Longowal and Prakash Singh Badal from the Akali Dal, in *The Hindustan Times*

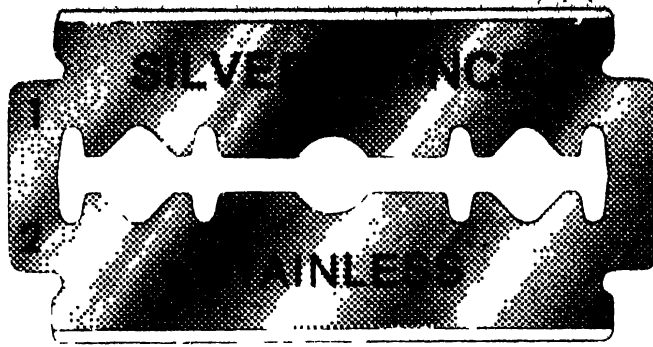
In China the trade unions train workers to be patriotic, whereas in India the communist trade unions have turned them into a privileged class—Subrata Mukherjee in *The Telegraph*

There is no use comparing me with (N. T.) Rama Rao, who has a different halo around him—that of a cine artiste...I am just a social reformist. Social reformists don't have a halo—Bal Thackeray, Shiv Sena chief, in *Bombay*

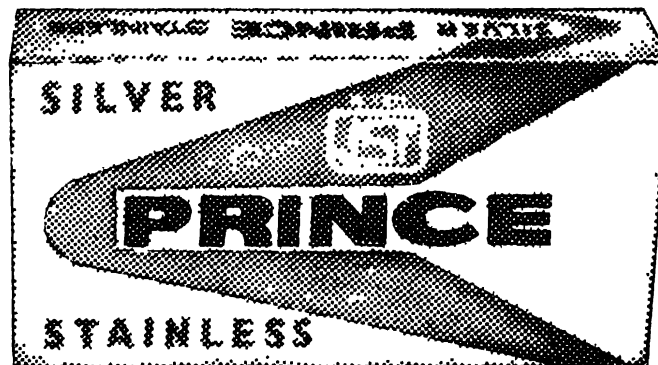
Newspapers and government media can't think beyond cricket...The excess of everything is bad—R.K. Jaichandra Singh, union minister of state for sports, in *Weekend Review*



I don't know anyone in the world who is used to demonstrations more than I am. They don't bother me—Ronald Reagan, on his reaction to anti-American demonstrations in Europe, in *Time*



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VARIETY

Chess

The logic of chess is not as cast-iron as one might imagine. If in today's game Speelman had foreseen 18 P-R5! he would have undoubtedly retreated 17 N-B2 and been crushed, whereas had his opponent anticipated Speelman's 23rd move he in turn would have resorted to 23 K-N1 and duly won. Thus Polugaevsky's error cost him the point which Speelman's oversight gained. A raw deal for 'Polu' but a tempestuous game.

White L. Polugaevsky Black J. Speelman Nimzo-Indian Defence London 1984

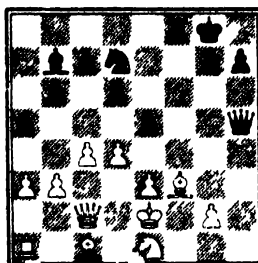
1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 P-QB4 P-K3
3 N-KB3 P-QN3 4 N-B3 B-N5
5 Q-B2 B-N2 6 P-QR3 BxN-
7 QxB P-QR4 8 P-QN3 Q-O
9 P-K3 P-Q3 10 B-Q3 QN-Q2
11 B-N2 Q-K2 12 O-O N-K5
13 Q-B2 P-KB4 14 N-K1!

Black's set-up is well known and relies on the generation of a kingside attack by R-B3-N3 or R3 supported by minor piece play. Polugaevsky's move starts an ambitious and farsighted plan to thwart Black's play at its inception.

14 Q-N4 15 B-B1!
A fine move, taking one step back as a preparation for taking several leaps forward.
15 Q-N3 16 P-B3 N-N4
17 P-KR4!!

Another brilliant concept. After 17

Speelman(Black) to move



Polugaevsky (White)

N-B2 18. ... AN4 followed by N-N2 Black will be engulfed.
17 N-K5!

Half genius, half desperation. The idea is 18 PxN PxP 19 B-K2 Q-N6 when White is strangely disorganised, but Polugaevsky finds a finesse.

18 P-R5! QxRP 19 PxN PxP
20 BxP RxR+ 21 KxR R-B1+
22 B-B3

Not at once 22 K-N1 Q-R5! 23 BxB QxN+ 24 K-R2 R-B8

22 P-K4 23 K-K2? DIAGRAM
Paradoxically the delayed 23 K-N1 would have left Black virtually without com-

penation, but as played he walks into a chamber of horrors.

23 RxB! 24 PxR P-KB1
Despite his extra rook White suddenly has terrible problems.

25 P-Q5 PxP+ 26 NxP N-K4
27 Q-K4 B-B1 28 B-Q2 B-B4
29 Q-B4 NxN

Disaster has struck. The knight cannot be recaptured because of B-N5, thus leaving the white king at the mercy of Black's minor pieces.

30 P-K4 N-K4+ 31 K-B1 B-R6+
32 K-N1 Q-N3+ 33 Resigns

Mating attack

White Didishko Black Litvinov Grunfeld Defence

1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 P-QB4 P-KN3
3 N-QB3 P-Q4 4 PxP NxP
5 P-K4 NxN 6 PxN B-N2
7 B-QB4 Q-O 8 N-K2 P-QB4
9 Q-O Q-B2 10 B-B4 P-K4
11 BxP BxB 12 Px8 QxP
13 B-Q5 N-B3 14 P-KB4 Q-B2
15 P-B5 Q-K4 16 Q-Q2 PxP
17 N-N3 PxP 18 QR-K1 B-K3
19 BxKP QR-Q1 20 Q-B1 R-Q4
21 Q-R6 Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

Bridge

The Langs Supreme Trophy, for which only players below a modest rank in the master point scheme are eligible, was contested by 166 teams this year in the London area. This is a tribute to the excellent work of two members especially of the London committee, and it also indicates the dislike that many hundreds of players feel for the wearisome conventions that are allowed in open events.

The final was contested between the tennis players from Queen's Club and the lady golfers from the Royal Wimbledon. Queen's led at half time but suffered a reverse on the first board of the second half.

Dealer North Game all

♠ 10 9 7 4
♥ A K 9 5 4 3
♦ A 10
♣ 7

♠ J 3
♥ J 10 2
♦ Q 9 8 3
♣ J 10 6 5

N
W E
S

♠ A K 6
♥ Q 8 7
♦ K 6 4 2
♣ A K 9

♠ Q 8 5 2
♥ 6
♦ J 7 5
♣ Q 8 4 3 2

Royal Wimbledon played in Six Hearts which is lay down (though declarer mishandled the trumps queen first is correct). For Queen's Eric Leigh Howard a strong player with over 50 years experience drove to 7NT from the South side. No doubt he thought that the opponents might press to even the match, and perhaps since he could count twelve top tricks he thought that one way or another he would come to a thirteenth. This could not be done as the cards lay, and it was the lady golfers who prevailed in the end.

TERENCE FLESC

Quiz

QUESTIONS

- The American continents are named after which 15th century explorer?
- How is South West Africa also known as?
- In music what is a cadence?
- What is the Bessemer process?
- The Cretaceous, Jurassic and Triassic ages on earth belong to which geological era?
- In which city have the Asian Games been held thrice?
- What is the currency of Venezuela?
- In medical terminology what is seborrhoea?
- Which radioactive element discovered by Madame Curie is named after her native land?

- Name the English novelist (the author of *Vanity Fair*) who was born in 1811 in Calcutta.
- Which country was the first to call itself a welfare state?
- With which governor general in India is the Permanent Settlement of Land Revenue associated?
- What do the initials UNCTAD stand for?
- He was in the Indian Medical Service, won the Nobel Prize in 1902 and discovered the Malaria parasite. Name him.

- 12 Lord Cornwallis
- 13 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- 14 Sir Ronald Ross

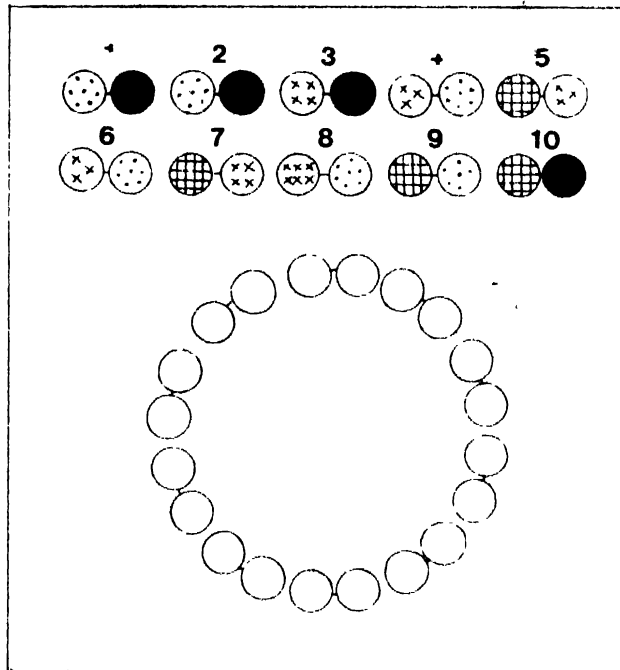
- 1 Amerigo Vesputti
- 2 Namibia
- 3 A closing passage of a composition or a passage coming to rest on a key note
- 4 A method used to directly convert cast-iron into steel
- 5 The Mesozoic era
- 6 Bangkok
- 7 The Bolivar
- 8 Overactivity of the sebaceous glands which lead to dandruff
- 9 Polonium after Poland
- 10 William Makepeace Thackeray
- 11 Britain in 1945 after the Labour government headed by Clement Attlee came to power

ANSWERS

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

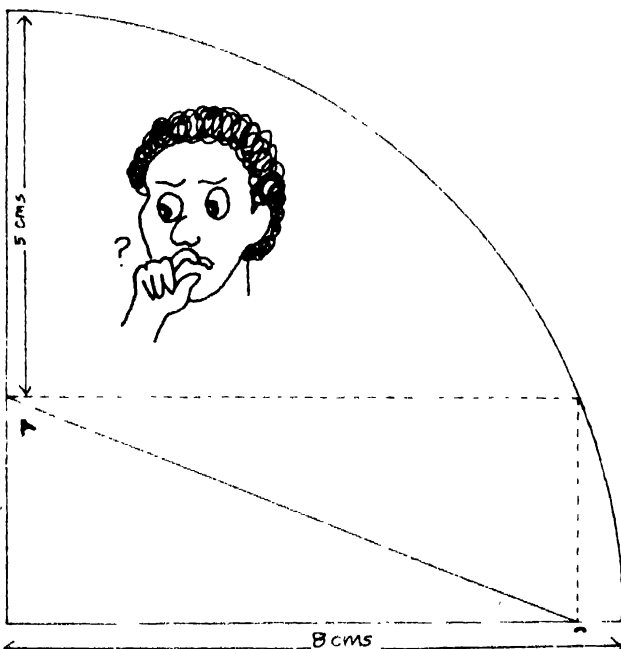
Wit Sharpener



Here are ten sets of teething discs for little babies, with different patterns on two discs of one set.

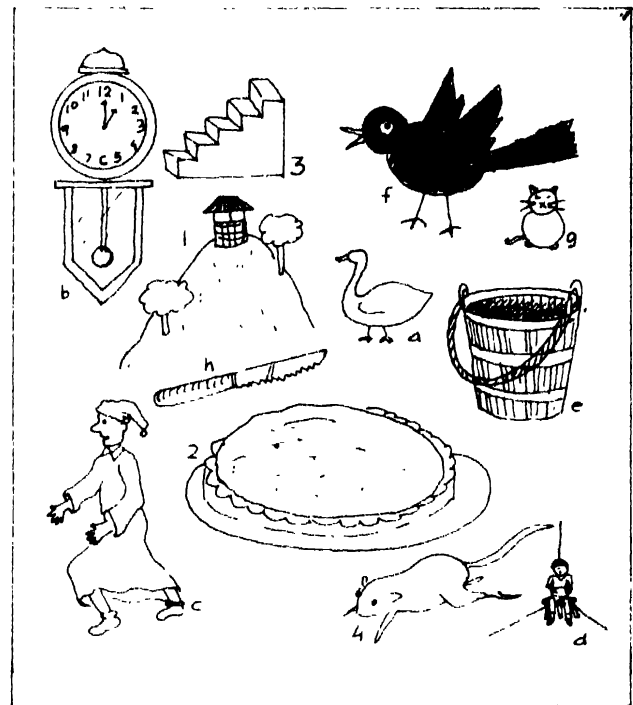
Can you put these rings in the circle above, so that two discs with the same pattern fall adjacent to each other? Breaking of each set in two separate discs is not allowed.

Quickthink



How quickly can you find the length of AB?

Mind Bender



Can you identify these nursery rhyme objects and characters? Match one item from numbers 1 to 4 to two items each from a to h.

Eezy!

What time of the day, when you looked at it upside down, would read the same?

Quizzbizz

Find two factors of 1,000,000 such that neither of the factors contain a zero?

What's in a Word

I call a 'positive' a 'negative' and a 'negative' a 'positive' and I have one in my left pocket and one in my right pocket. Then, I exchange what I had in my left pocket with the one I had in my right pocket. Then, I find that the one that was not in my left pocket was not a 'positive'. What was in my left pocket to start with?

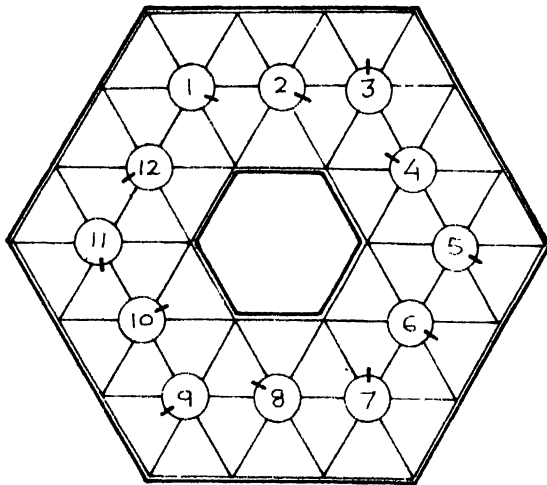
Missing Link

— — — — — ack

Fill in the three blanks with three consecutive letters from the alphabet to make a word connected with aeroplanes.

TEASERS

Word Play



This word maze will contain 12 words, when completed, one letter per space, reading in either clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below.

1. Variation of RUBLE.
2. Sob'ran amuck, to be noble
3. Goes up
4. Suckled
5. Where cakes are baked
6. A small cake
7. A scarlet sage flower.
8. Indigenous
9. Opposite of waning
10. Glorify
11. My seat, taken around.
12. First person, singular

Figure it Out

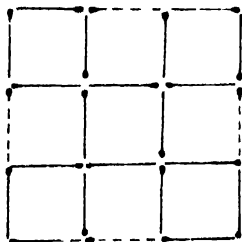
AA EE II LL OO

Can you figure out a living creature which begins with each of the pairs of letters given above?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Witsharpener: Clock A shows 10 O'clock, Clock B shows 4 O'clock; Clock C shows 4 O'clock; Clock D shows 3 O'clock.

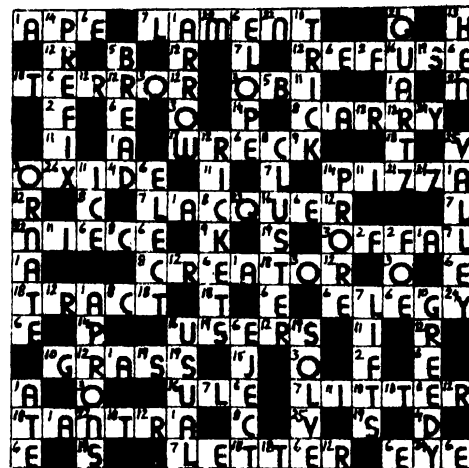
Mindbender:



What's in a Word: Sport, Crude, Noose, Print, Batch, Hasp. SCORCH

Shape Sleuth: 1) b 8; 11) h 5, 111) c 6; 1V) c 7; V) d 6; VI) f 7

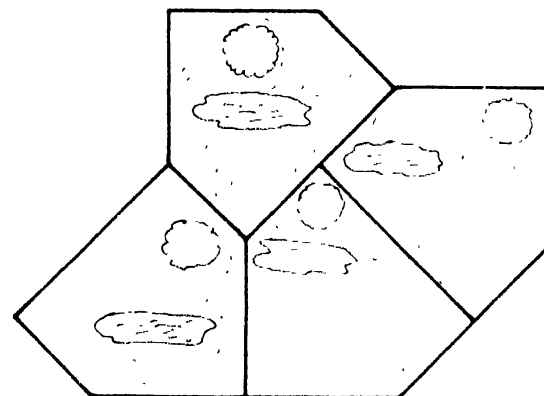
Cryptocross:

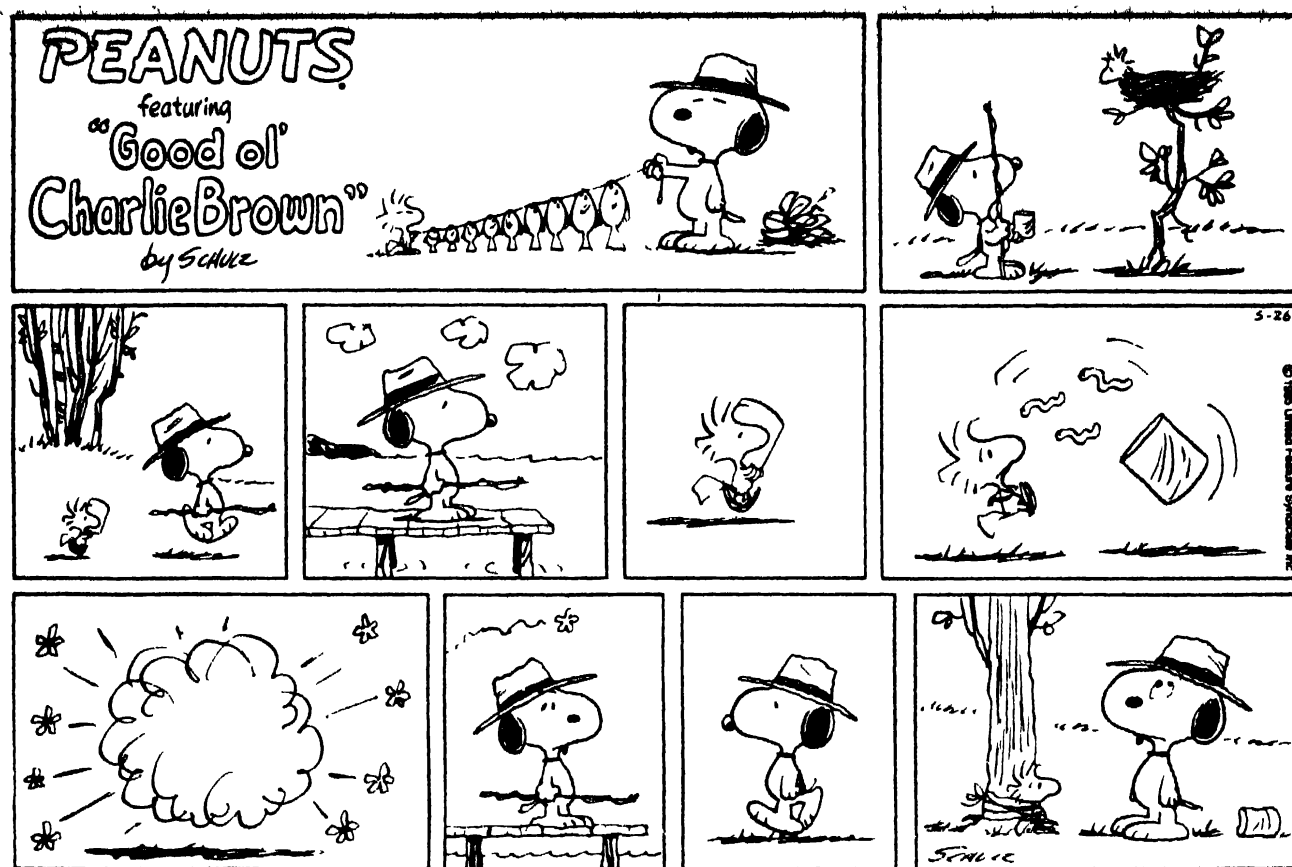


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	F	O	D	B	E	L	C	K	G	I	R	H
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
P	J	U	W	T	S	M	Z	N	Q	Y	V	X

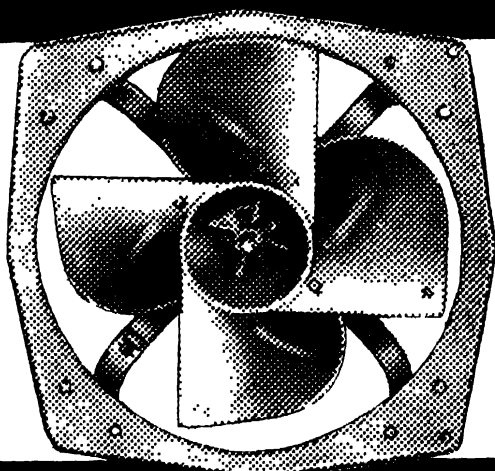
Quick Think: From the units column, since C appears in the answer, A + B-10. Therefore there is a carrying figure of 1 in the tens column. From this figure since B appears in the answer, 1 + A + C-10 and there is a carrying figure of 1 in the hundreds column. This being so, the hundreds column is just like the tens and so there is a carrying figure of 1 in the thousands, so that A-1, B-9 and C-8. The answer is 1998.

Shape Sleuth (Page 77):





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 - High suction power
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The failure of *Shiva ka Insaaf* has given the jitters to Jackie Shroff, who was riding a high horse prior to its release. Gone are the days when he could dictate terms. He had hired the man who was Rajesh Khanna's secretary to look after his career. He had hiked his price and even demanded top billing. Then this film on which he was depending so much failed to make much of an impact and Jackie had to start thinking about his career all over again. Producers and distributors who considered him as a replacement to Amitabh Bachchan are having second thoughts now. Will Yash (where he co-stars with Anil Kapoor) boost his career?

Malicious gossip can sometimes wreak havoc on the personal lives of stars. The latest one says that Rishi Kapoor could not tolerate his wife Neetu Singh any longer and so their marriage was on the rocks. The story gained momentum when Rishi was away in Sharjah and extended his stay even after the cricket matches were over. Not only were the couple upset but the entire Kapoor clan was in a state of tension. Things became clear only when Rishi returned and said "I really don't know how to react to all this. It is a creation of someone's wild imagination. How can they be so nasty to two people who are happy the way they are?"



Rishi Kapoor: victim of malicious gossip

G. Sh. Shukla

Anupam Kher is apparently passing through a crucial phase these days. His affair with a married woman who was once his colleague in theatre is now the talk of the industry and is damaging his career. Anupam denies the whole story and says that it is deliberately planted by some of his friends who are jealous of him. "I can have an affair with any girl, why should I fall for her and ruin her married life?" said Anupam, who had divorced his first wife even before he could make it big.

The director-actress husband-wife team of I. V. Sasi and Seema are trying to recapture Malayalam cinema and have succeeded to some extent. Seema acts in most of the movies that Sasi directs and insiders say that one condition Sasi sets before producers is that his wife should play the lead in the movies he directs. In *Anubandham* written by renowned novelist Vasudevan Nair, Sasi takes special care to focus the spotlight on his wife Seema. The camera lingers deliberately on Seema who plays the sinned-against woman—a great jump indeed from the leg and cleavage roles she started with.

It appears that 3-D films and Poonam Dhillon are not made for each other. She was very excited about her role in *Sheesh Mahal*, a 3-D film which was launched soon after the success of *Chhota Chetan*. Then disaster struck. *Raj Sippy's Shiva ka Insaaf* flopped miserably and *Sheesh Mahal* was the first film to be dropped. Poonam lost a golden opportunity which could have worked wonders.

It is a sight to see Raaj Kumar (the eccentric actor) shooting with Prakash Mehra, his bete noire, as his director. Raaj Kumar incidentally had insulted Prakash Mehra once; he refused to work with him because "he puts too much oil in his hair." He had turned down the leading man's role in *Zanjeer*, which was done ultimately by Amitabh Bachchan. "I have forgotten the past because I always had this ambition to direct Raaj Kumar one day," Prakash says.

Stardom has introduced Farha to star tantrums which she must control if she wishes to go far. The credit for her stardom goes largely to *Shabana Azmi* and her family, who found the potential in her and promoted her.



Nagji

Poonam Dhillon, unhappy experience with 3-D films

Nehru's Legacy?

The Medical Council of India has threatened to derecognise Pondicherry's Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER). Reason the central government run institute does not have enough teachers in the postgraduate section (Apart from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi and Post graduate Institute of Medicine Chandigarh, JIPMER is the only institution in the south). The staff vacancies are to be filled up by personnel of the Central Health Services, an all India transferable cadre. Since Pondicherry is not considered to be a popular posting, many faculty positions have been lying vacant for some time. As a result of the callousness of a section of the union health ministry, an institution dedicated to Jawaharlal Nehru is now facing the ignominy of derecognition.

Unity Moves

The Congress centenary year is being sought to be used by a powerful section of the Congress (Socialist) to stage a comeback to the mainstream. Moves are afoot in the Sharad Pawar led party to join the Congress(I). In the scheme for merger being discussed, it is believed that Sharad Pawar at present the leader of the opposition in Maharashtra may be offered the chief ministership in place of Vasantdada Patil. In the centre the Congress(S) with its five members—three in the Lok Sabha and two in the Rajya Sabha—may be offered a ministerial berth. Two of the three Lok Sabha members being from the south, the choice of a minister from this faction if unity takes place may not be difficult.

Power Minister's Blackout?



Arun Nehru

Where was Arun Kumar Nehru on 4 and 5 May? The union minister of state for power was not seen at the AICC(I) session at the Talkatora stadium. Though he is not an office bearer of the party anymore, one would have expected his powerful presence at the Congress session. On 6 May when the centenary celebrations began, Arun Nehru was not seen at the Indira Gandhi stadium. Has he stopped taking in

terest in party matters? He has been unhappy over the way the new Indian Youth Congress president was appointed. It is well known that Arun Nehru was opposed to the selection of Anand Sharma as the IYC chief. His candidates were Nirmal Khatri of Uttar Pradesh and Gurudas Kamat of Maharashtra. But his objections regarding Anand Sharma could not stop the youth leader from Himachal Pradesh (and the youngest member of the House of Elders, the Rajya Sabha) from getting the appointment letter. Anand Sharma has been in the Arun Singh camp since the battle royal between the two Aruns began. His choice of the right Arun way back in 1982 (when Arun Singh moved into the Rajiv Gandhi team) has paid dividends now.

Pranab's Comeback



Pranab Mukherjee

Pranab Kumar Mukherjee has staged a comeback. After Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had described him as a 'good, goody' person in an interview with SUNDAY, one had thought that the former finance minister had receded into the background. But Mukherjee seems to enjoy the proverbial nine lives of a cat. At first he was made the West Bengal PCC(I) president. Then he was seen at the centre stage of the Congress session, where he moved the economic re-

solution. Within a few days of the AICC meeting, Mukherjee's rehabilitation became more evident when the post of the chairman of the State Bank of India, which had been lying vacant for over a year, was filled up. The choice of D.N. Ghosh, an Indian Audit and Accounts Service officer who had served a long and distinguished spell in the department of banking till some years ago, is seen in the bureaucracy as a victory for Pranab Mukherjee. Ghosh, incidentally, had been made the defence production secretary only recently. Apparently, despite computerisation, the government could not make up its mind about how best to utilise Ghosh's services and in the process the department of defence production saw one of the shortest secretarial tenures. If Ghosh had to go to the SB, then could he not have been sent there three months back?

Missing Stars



Sunil Dutt

The Member of Parliament from Allahabad, Amitabh Bachchan, was not seen at the first ever AICC session held since his entry in politics. Neither was the MP from Bombay, Sunil Dutt, around. Both these filmstar-turned politicians chose to absent themselves from the party meeting. Two other star politicians, Sivan Ganesan and Vajravanthimala, were of course present at the AICC session. On the day the Congress centenary celebrations began, Sunil Dutt was busy in Bombay, organising demonstrations



Amitabh Bachchan

against video piracy. Film stars, after all, will be film stars, even if political stardom be thrust upon them.

TAILPIECE Sharad Pawar has been allotted house No B4 near the Sachivalaya in Bombay. This was till recently occupied by Shalini Patil, who was evicted by her husband's regime because she is no longer a minister. The talk in Bombay is that whether Sharad Pawar will step into Vasantdada's shoes, but he has moved into Shalini's house.

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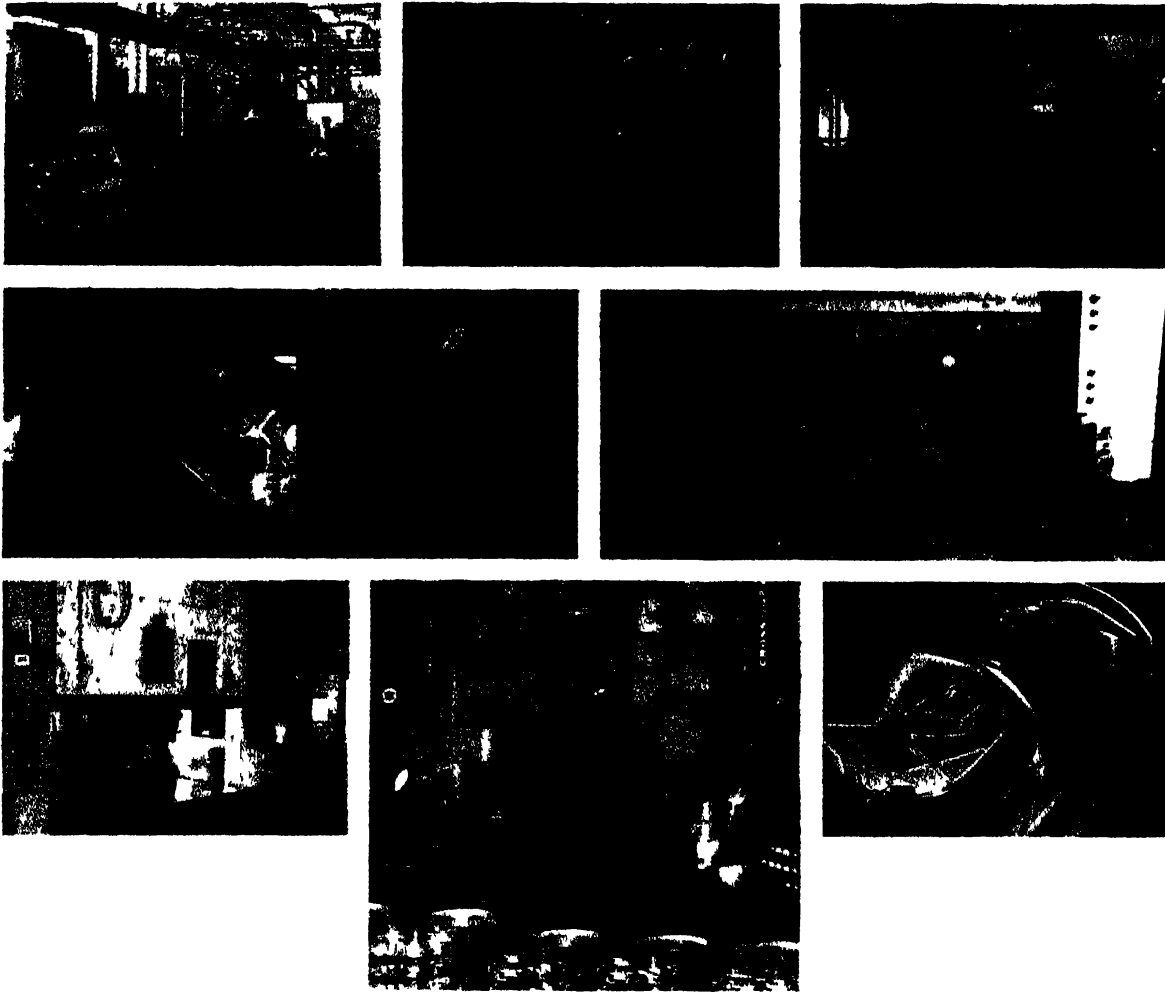
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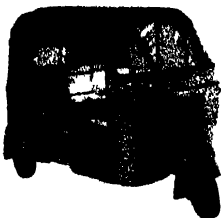


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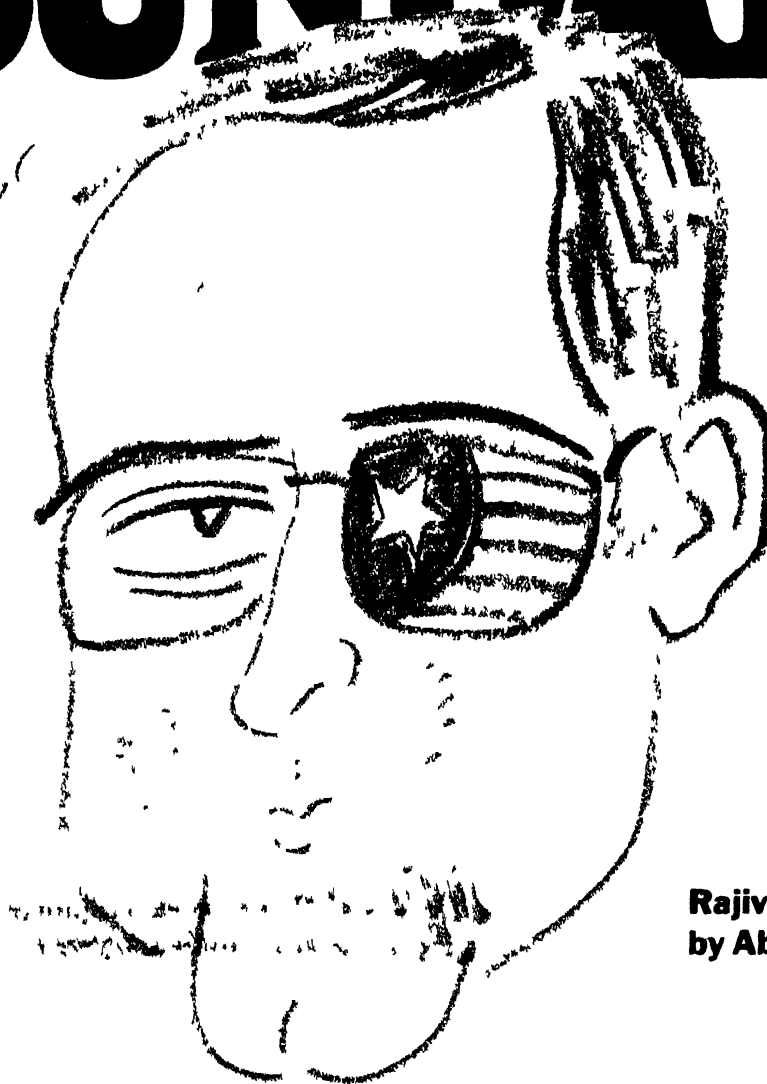


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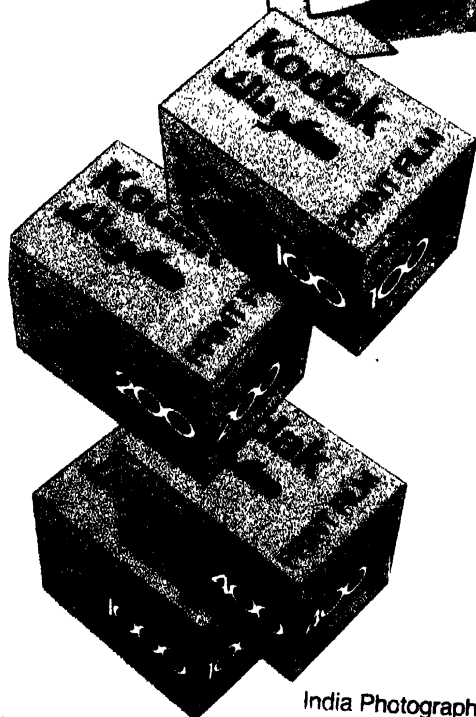
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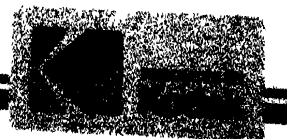
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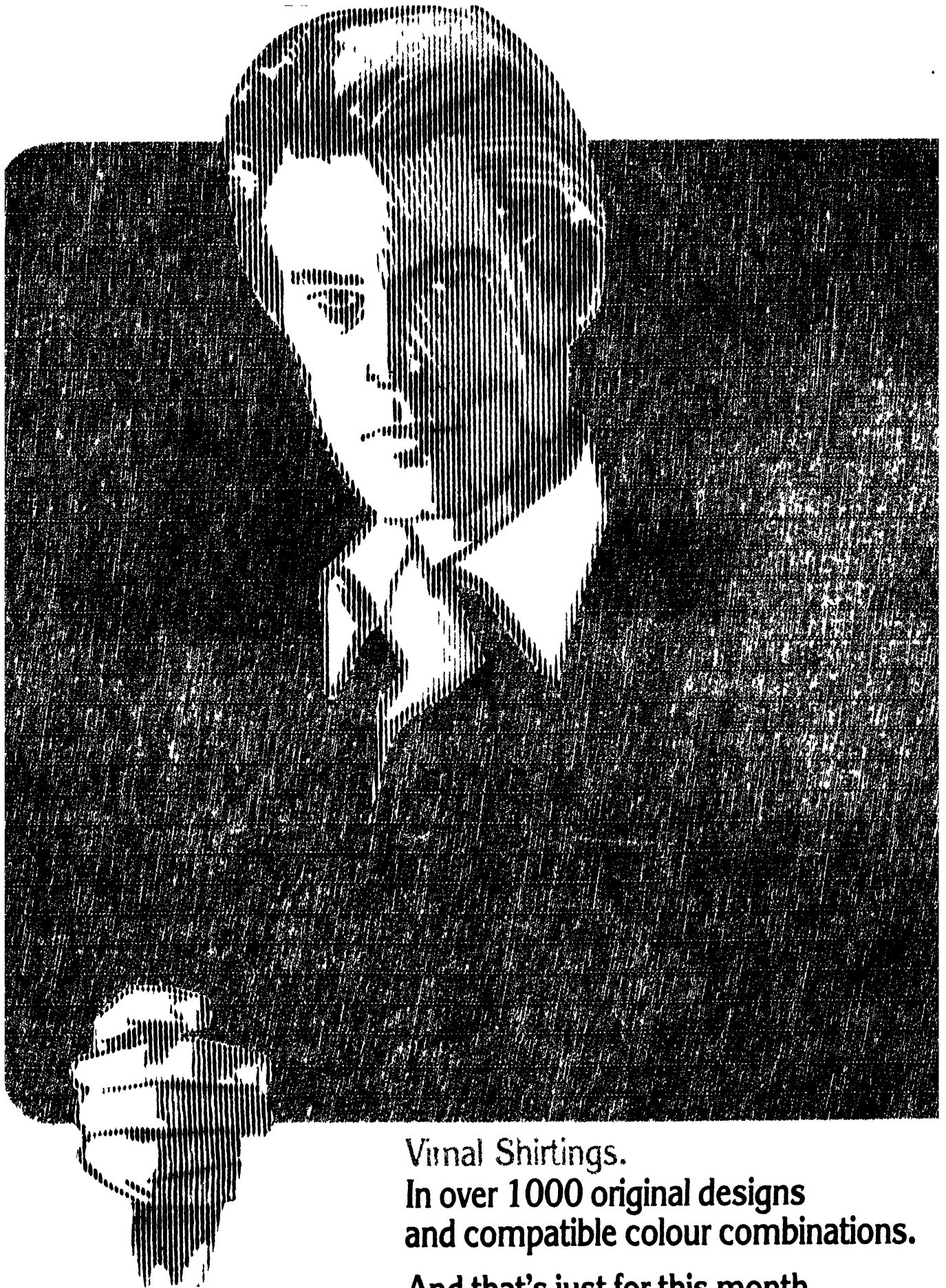
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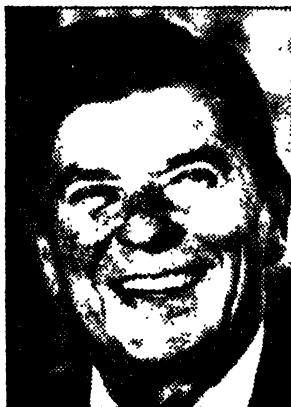
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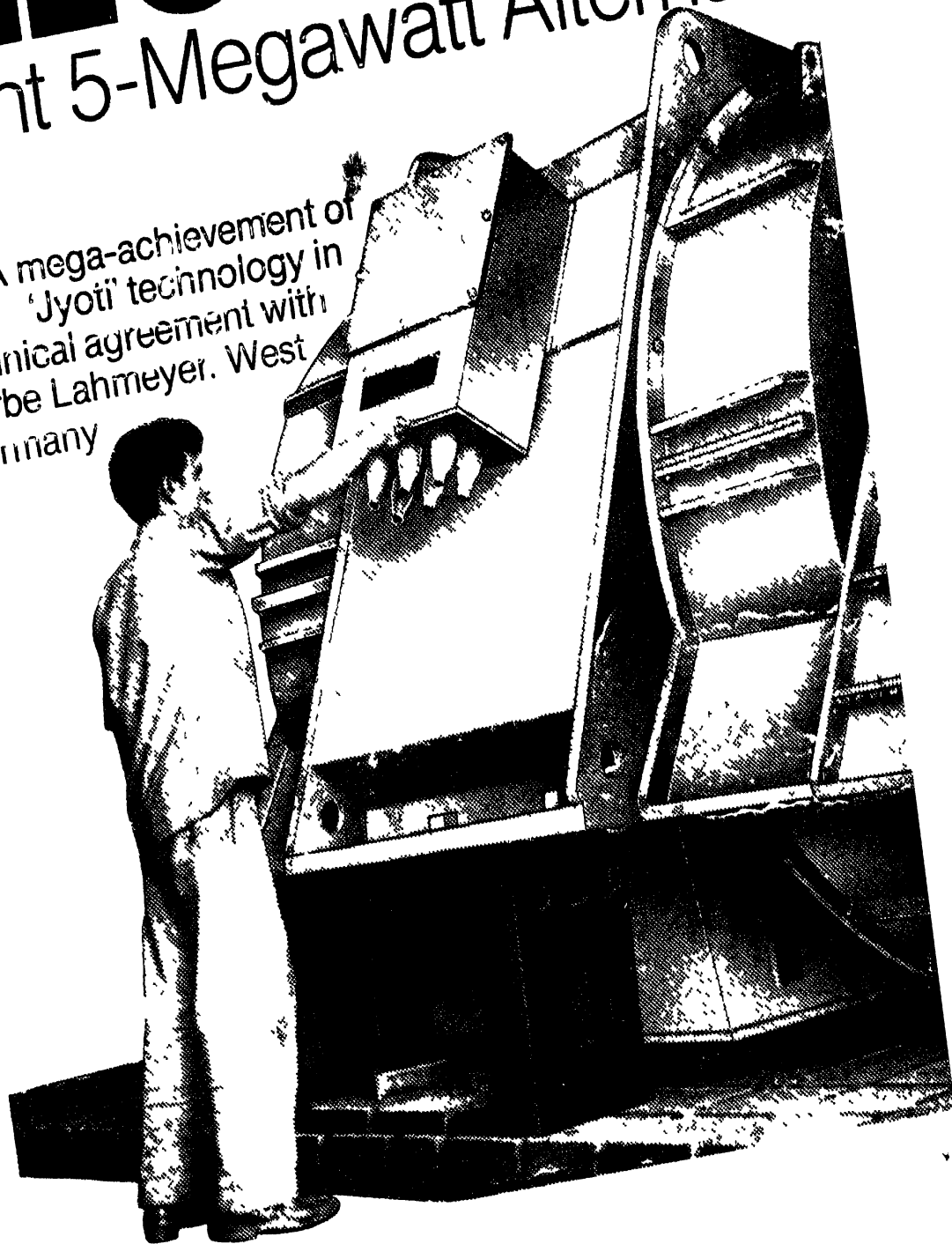
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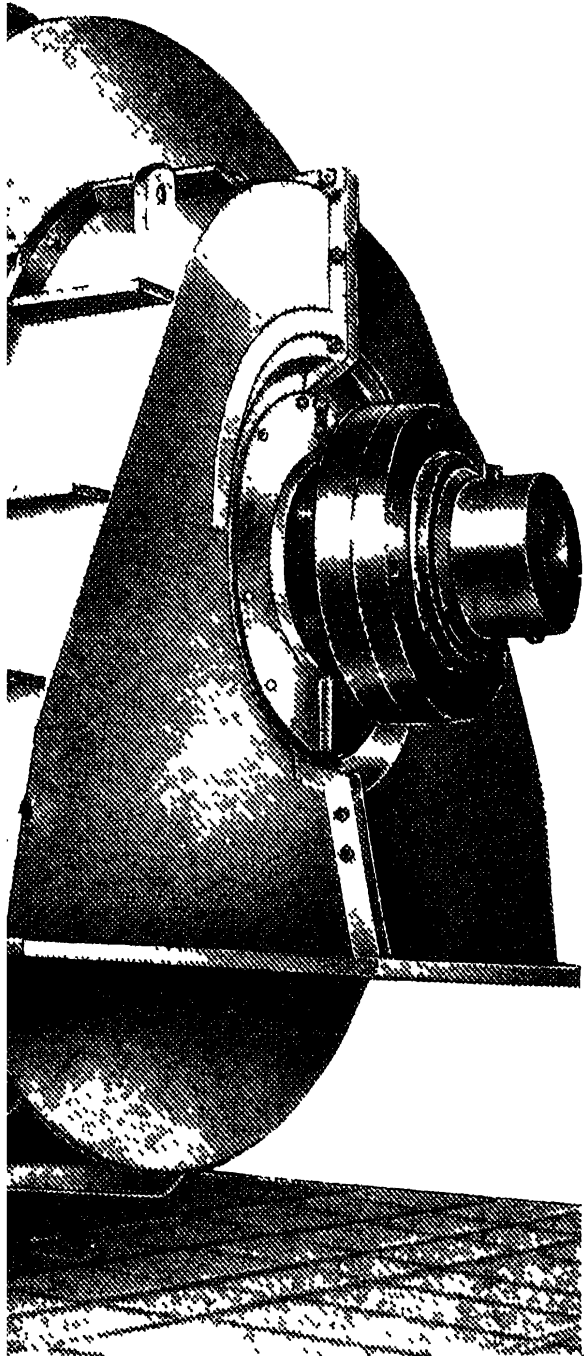
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Calcutta: It was an appropriate nickname: The loadshedding flight. It has happened twice with me, and judging by the familiarity with which other passengers greeted the incident, the situation is clearly well-known in the flying fraternity. A little before take-off, after one had settled into flight 264 from Delhi to Calcutta, and was mentally adjusting to a couple of hours above the clouds, the lights inside the Airbus suddenly went off. Even in the late evening, as on 23 May, the temperature inside the belly of this huge whale of a plane can quickly get stifling. However, it is not the temperature that really worries, but the thought of what might happen if the engines become equally temperamental while in the sky. Hardened Calcuttans, now so used to finding a balm for their discomfort in bitter laughter, quickly began cracking jokes to ease the tension. "The loadshedding has started," said a voice, and the laughter helped Stoic old Calcutta: seen it all; its unfazed citizens treating the first spell of Airbus loadshedding with humour and the second (which followed a little after the lights came back) with a resigned sigh. How would these passengers vote in the coming Corporation elections, I wondered, where civic services would be the issue? Would the flying classes vote at all?

Calcutta, it may not be dying but it does need medical aid often enough to start rumours. Anyway, civic democracy at least has come out of the hospital ward where it had been convalescing after the near-fatal attack of paralysis in the Sixties. After all these years, a mayor of Calcutta will be elected again. Not everyone will leap with joy at the thought. While at one end of the scale Calcutta has been justly proud of mayors like Subhas Chandra Bose, there have been others on the list who would not be welcome in polite company. In fact, it was when the quality degenerated from devoted nationalists to manipulators that the state government decided that enough was more than enough, and the corporators were packed off. We welcome the return of democracy with the news that a few of the candidates on both the major sides, the Congress(I) and the Left Front, are distinguished by the fact that they have police records. But I suppose in these unusual times we should be thankful that only a very few of the candidates have this distinction and not more.

Can tomorrow's city fathers do what yesterday's were unable to

achieve? The accusations against Calcutta are not new. Looking at the poverty, the underworld, slums, riots and—but, of course—inadequate lighting, Robert Clive labelled it the most wicked place in the universe while the Poet Laureate of the Empire, Rudyard Kipling, described Calcutta as the city of the dreadful night. Mr Jyoti Basu, of course, was not in power then. It seems that Calcutta was always good only in parts. The journey downhill has recently been accelerated by the myopia of the politician and the indolence of the babu who cannot reach Writers Building on time and then takes a bribe for doing some work between the gossip. (Calcutta may be the only city where gossip, or *adda*, has been turned into an art form.) But the blame is not entirely theirs. In fact, the English and their cultural descendants, the brown bureaucrats, have effectively disguised their role in the decline of Calcutta. Some idea of how callous English rule in our country was can be gauged from the fact that the English allowed *millions*—millions, not hundreds, not thousands, not tens of thousands, but millions—to starve to death in a man-made famine just a few years before they left India. There can hardly be a parallel record of inhumanity. If Hitler gassed six million Jews, then the British killed millions of Bengalis by denying them food—surely an equally horrible death. And yet, strangely, the opprobrium which rightly has visited the Germans has escaped the British. Why? Think about it: millions died of hunger, not guns or gas or bombs. And in a year of bumper crops. Speaking in the House of Commons, L. S. Amery, secretary of state for India, admitted in 1943: "There is no overall shortage of foodgrains, India has harvested a bumper crop of wheat this spring. There is however, grave maldistribution." What more could be said by way of self-indictment? Why did we forget the fortieth anniversary of this British-made famine which killed millions on the streets of Calcutta and the villages of Bengal? That famine broke the heart of Calcutta.

And after famine came civil war. There is no point blaming the white man for this catastrophe. Even while the British had not yet finished packing on the eve of their departure we took out our long knives and began mayhem of the most vicious kind. And it was in Calcutta that the horror began, with the killings of 1946. That horror has not gone yet; just under the skin, in the nerves, lives the fear

that what happened once could recur, and Calcutta still trembles at the thought of communal riots. But it was in Calcutta also that Mahatma Gandhi could work his last miracle. If during those awful days in 1947 the Mahatma proved that he was a Mahatma, Calcutta also proved what Calcutta could be if its unique spirit, if its unique commitment to humanity was awakened by the touch of a saint's sacrifice. Both in 1946 and 1947 it was the same schizophrenic Calcutta.

The refugees came bearing their burdens, and the city helped them without the benefit of the generosity shown by the centre to the northerners. The pressure on civic services jumped up. Then in the Sixties, Calcutta became the victim of a tragic political romance—a violent excess of leftism. The children of imperial capitalism shrank away from the chaos and went to Bombay, while the budding indigenous moneymaker took advantage. Industry perished and jobs went where unions with a less revolutionary zeal could be found. Strangely, it took a long while for the middle class of the city which could not, or would not, go away from the city to realise the extent of the self-destruction, and the nature of the shadows it would cast on the future. By the time the counter-revolution came with the victory of the Congress in the 1970s, too many wounds had been inflicted.

When an uncertain CPI(M) rode to power in 1977, it was in no mood to pamper the city where it had lost so much of its cadre, the city which had led the anti-Left momentum in 1971. While the party concentrated on trying to become impregnable in the villages, Calcutta was left to its own abilities. It was only in its second spell that the CPI(M) began to appreciate that pique could be self-defeating. But the party's urban policy was in the hands of the clerk, and the resources went into pampering the support base rather than helping the city. Calcutta decisively rejected the Left last December. And then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi made the mistake of saying that Calcutta was dying when he wanted to convey that the CPI(M) was killing it. Calcutta cringed, the CPI(M) gloated, and a myriad voices rose to say that the city would show the young Prime Minister that it would never die. Seizing the chance, the Left Front government ordered civic elections. So here we are, in the middle of another comma in the city's history.

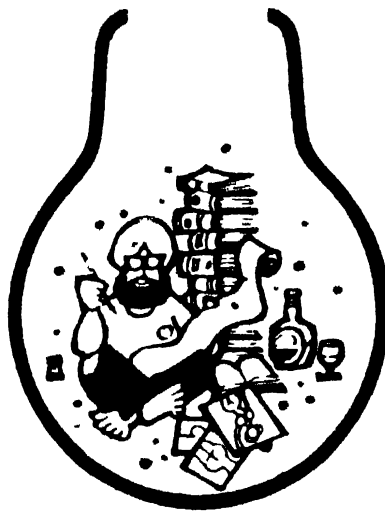
May it be the pause that refreshes.

For Lovers of Urdu

Three years ago my friend, the poet Ali Sardar Jafri, wrote to me from Bombay to ask whether I would be willing to write a foreward to an anthology of modern Urdu poetry compiled by some academics in Canada. I wrote back saying that I did not know enough of Urdu poetry to be able to pronounce on it. To my dismay Jafri agreed with my verdict on myself. "I know you know little or nothing of Urdu, nevertheless these Canadians are anxious that you should write the foreward. They will send you the page proofs of their translations along with the originals. You may learn something from them."

The page proofs arrived. I read them with much profit to myself. Then wrote a foreward admitting my shortcomings. One of the translators, Baidar Bakht (cousin or nephew of Sikandar Bakht, once minister in the Janata government) spent an evening with me to discuss the projected translation. Now I have it with me. *An Anthology of Modern Urdu Poetry* Vol. I edited and translated by Baidar Bakht and Kathleen Grant Jarrett (Educational Publishing House, Delhi). As Sardar Jafri had said, I have learnt a great deal from re-reading the text. I was appalled at my ignorance. I had known Makhdoom Mohi uddeen of Hyderabad as a songster (*Chameli key manduey taley*)—I discover that he was a powerful revolutionary poet. I had never read anything by N M Rashed Meeran or Munib ur Rehman, I only knew the more popular poems of Faiz and Ali Sardar Jafri. Akhtar ul Iman whose non-descript stage personality and feeble voice had made me underestimate him, turns out to be a great if not greater than his contemporaries. Comparisons between poets are odious, all of them are peerless in their own ways. Missing from the list are many equally good poets. Jigar, Iqbal, Faiz, Agha Hashi Kashmiri, Kif Azmi. But then this is only the first volume. Many others will follow. *Inshallah*.

Trying to pick poems as illustrations is a very frustrating job. Some are examples of musical simplicity which is almost impossible to recreate in translation. Take for example Faiz's *Kucch ishq kiyaa, kucch kaam kiyaa*. I loved a little and worked a little.



*Voh log bahut khush qismat they
Jo ishq ko kaam amashqev they
Yeh kaam say aa hqi karney they
Ham jetaay ji mastooft rahay
Kucch ishq kiyaa kucch kaam kiyaa*
(Those were the fortunate few
Who regarded love as their work
Or fell in love with the work they did
We were such that remained busy all
our lives
We loved a little and worked a
little.)

The poem ends with the punch line:

*Phir jakhn tang aa kat ham nay
Donon ko adhoora chhor diya*
(In the end we got so fed up
We left both love and work half
done.)

Of the many excellent poems in this anthology, Akhtar ul Iman's long poem on his alter ego entitled *Ek Laika* (A Boy) is outstanding. I have tried many times to translate it, but have got no further than making a prose version—which does not do justice to it. Baidar Bakht and his lady associate have captured its spirit much better than my prosaic attempt.

On the hills near villages in the
cart.

Comparisons between poets are odious, all of them are peerless in their own ways. Missing from the list (in the anthology of Urdu poetry) are many good poets... But then this is only the first volume. Many others will follow, *Inshallah!*

Sometimes in mango orchards,
sometimes on dykes
Sometimes in the lanes, some-
times in the lakes,
Sometimes amongst the merriment
of youngsters half clad,
A dawning, dusk, in darkness of
the night,
Sometimes at fairs, among the
pantomime players,
Or lost on quiet bypaths chasing
butterflies
Or sneaking towards the hidden
nests of little birds,
Barefoot no matter what the
weather
Out of school, in deserted abodes
Sometimes laughing in a group of
pretty girls
Sometimes restless like a whirl
wind
In dreams, floating in the air
flying like a cloud,
Swinging in the trees like the
little birds,
I see a boy, wandering carefree,
independent
As the flowing water of mountain
streams
This nuisance acts like my
shadow
Following my every step pursuing
me no matter where I go
As if I were an escaped convict
And he asks me: Are you really
Akhtar ul Iman?

Lovers of Urdu poetry (may
their tribe increase!) will be gratified
with this appetiser of a feast to come
in subsequent volumes. I only wish
besides the Urdu, the authors had
also added a Devanagari transcript of
the poems.

Holy Wisdom

It occurred to a middle aged man
that human life was very short. He
thought he should live for at least a
hundred years. He went to see a
sadhu meditating in the Himalayas
and said "O holy man, this life
passes within the twinkling of an eye.
Give me some *mantra* so that I could
live at least 100 years."

"Do you drink tea or coffee?"
asked the *sadhu*.

"No, sir, I drink only milk, but I can
do without milk."

"What about alcohol?"

"I am a teetotaler."

"Women?"

"I don't have any vices, *Sadhu*
Maharaj, I only have pious
thoughts."

Spoke the holy man, "Then why on
earth do you wish to live a hundred
years?" (Contributed by S Padma
nabhan)



Freeing the Judiciary

I can find no reason for the cancellation of the joint conference of Chief Justices, chief ministers and law ministers scheduled for May 30. The reason could not be the fact that the Chief Justice of India, Y.V. Chandrachud is retiring on 12 July; this must have been known when the date for the conference was fixed. Furthermore, the conference had already been associated with Justice P.N. Bhagwati, the Chief Justice designate. The Prime Minister, who was to participate in the conference, had himself given the date to accommodate it in his schedule of engagements, squeezing it between his return from the Soviet Union and his departure for France and the US.

Only a few days before the cancellation, was announced I had met Asoke Sen, law minister. He was certainly looking forward to the conference, and made no secret of his unhappiness over the backlog of cases in the Supreme Court, the High Courts and the lower courts. What was the use of justice being given after several years?

Against this background the postponement of the conference was all the more regrettable. It will take time to fix a new date and consideration of the reforms meant to speed up the administration of justice will be further delayed. The agenda of the conference includes a number of important issues to be discussed:

- The decision to eliminate arrears of cases in courts at all levels, from the Supreme Court to the subordinate judiciary and the means for achieving this;
- the decision to simplify procedure (civil and criminal) in courts at all levels and to eliminate delay and red-tapism;
- the system of effective legal aid for the poor and needy and assistance to deserving members of the bar and the ways and means of achieving this;
- improvement and building of courtrooms and their amenities, to improve the administration;
- rationalisation or abolition of court fees for initiating proceedings in court and recouping the loss by imposing a tax on successful decree holders on a reasonable *ad valorem* basis;
- the question of improving the quality of judges at all levels by making judicial posts attractive for the best talent in the country and the ways and means for achieving this.

Of course, there has been no dearth of suggestions, even before this. The Supreme Court itself appointed a committee of its judges and they gave a number of proposals to reduce the arrears. V.M. Tarkunde, himself a judge once, had pointed out how four national tribunals could reduce the work load of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. The national tribunals he had in mind were those for income tax cases, for revenue matters like excise, customs, sales

tax, etc., for labour disputes, and for service cases.

A major problem is the appointment of only the "right type of judges." The judiciary is yet to recover from the harm caused by Mohan Kumaramangalam's pernicious thesis of "committed judges." I recall that when I met Kumaramangalam during the Parliament debate on the supersession of judges in 1973, he said: "What I want to say is that a duty is laid upon the government that not merely must we take into consideration the judicial integrity, which we do, not merely the legal knowledge and skill, which we do, but also the philosophy and outlook of the judges."

Though he was then the minister of steel, he was a close adviser of Mrs Gandhi. H.R. Gokhale, then the law minister, later rued the havoc caused in the judiciary during the emergency. When I met him a few days before his death, Gokhale said that the arguments he had given to justify the actions taken during the emergency and what Mrs Gandhi had done, lay heavy on his conscience. More recently the worst culprits in this regard are the two former law ministers, Jagannath Kaushal and P. Shiv Shanker, who has been reelected to Parliament (Rajya Sabha) from Gujarat after being defeated in the Lok Sabha poll in Andhra Pradesh. Here is a record of what happened during their tenure:

- R. Dayal, the metropolitan magistrate of Delhi who gave the orders for Mrs Gandhi's release, was later appointed to Sikkim High Court, superseding 30 senior judges in the Delhi judicial service.

- Justice M. Shukla was temporarily appointed as Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court. After he had confirmed 16 appointments opposed by his predecessor, Chief Justice Agarwal, who was transferred to the Calcutta High Court, Justice Shukla was confirmed.

- C. J. Oza was made Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court and he confirmed 10 appointments which were held up till his predecessor, G. P. Singh, retired. Oza is being tipped for a Supreme Court post.

The idea of transferring Chief Justices and judges of High Courts was masterminded and implemented by P. Shiv Shanker and J. Kaushal, former law ministers. Unless their policy is discontinued the judiciary cannot regain its lost status. Asoke Sen has prepared a note suggesting overhauling the entire system. But both Kaushal and Shiv Shanker have already gone to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to complain that Sen is going against Mrs Gandhi's policies. Though Rajiv Gandhi has shown a welcome tendency to give up some of his mother's practices, perhaps the bar councils should take up the matter strongly if they want the judiciary to stay independent.

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Diplomatic Dialogue

M J Akbar interviewed General Zia ul Haq with great keenness and perception (*'Halwas and Mithais Make a Lot of Us in Pakistan and India Join Hands Together'* 12-18 May). However, Mr Akbar should have pursued the Kashmir issue and Pakistan's attitude towards the nuclear build up in our region
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• The interview was interesting and there was a lot to read between the lines. I admired General Zia's power of convincing people. He is a shrewd diplomat and that is the secret behind his remaining in power for so long.

S Umesh Naidu, Sindri

• The interview cleared many misconceptions I had about our neighbour. The questions covered most of the sensitive issues and the Pakistani President was also forthright in his answers.

H K Nagaraj, Bangalore

• The witty and bold dialogue with the Pakistani President was truly a treat. The interviewer outwitted the shrewd general. But I appreciated the composure of Zia ul Haq in the face of the provocative questions thrown at him. Frankly, Zia appeared to be a dictator but a lovable one.

Smrita Narang, New Delhi

• I always admired General Zia's sense of humour. He is, in my opinion, the shrewdest politician in the subcontinent.

G S Ravi, Arsikere (Karnataka)

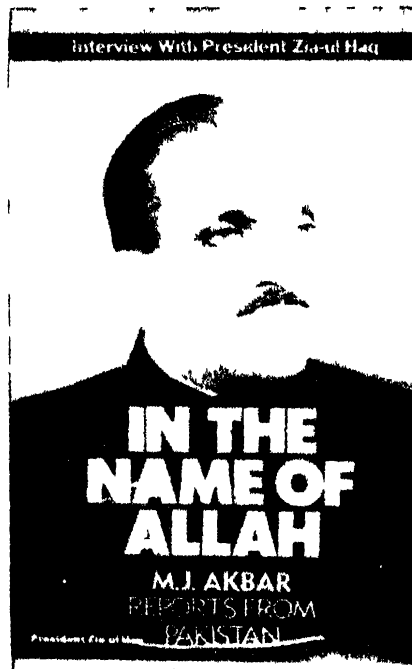
• The interview along with the selected photographs made interesting reading. The exhaustive conversation touched all the sensitive issues.

Vinod Kumar Mittal, Jaipur

• Mr Akbar's questions were witty and he tried to catch Zia on the wrong foot but the Pakistani President too was diplomatic and he successfully avoided controversial issues. I appreciated the general's view that peace cannot be enforced by any organisation or body, it can only come about if the citizens of both the countries interact with one another.

Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Sambalpur

• The report from Karachi, *In the Name of Allah*, and the interview with General Zia ul Haq helped us to know a lot about the situation prevailing there. It also helped to clear a



lot of suspicions we had about Pakistan's intentions.

Y Surendran, Madras

• President Zia's assurance that the arms Pakistan is acquiring from the USA is only to defend itself and will never be used against India is simply unbelievable. Our experiences, so far, have proved that Pakistan has always attacked India whenever it has gathered sufficient strength and armaments. India must always be prepared for such an eventuality.

Subal Chandra Saha, Malda (West Bengal)

• The interview will go down as an effort to promote good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. From the conversation Zia appeared to have forgotten the past.

Subas Ram Anandpur, Orissa

Pipeline Politics

This has reference to Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's investigation, *The Controversial Pipeline* (12-18 May). In the article, the author had reported that Snamprogetti had been awarded the contract for the HBJ pipeline project. But GAIL and EIL have so far, not even invited global tenders for the construction of the pipeline as per their recent decision. So where is the question of award of the contract? Nevertheless, we assure all concerned that Snamprogetti and its consortium partners would not at all like to disprove the correspondent's prophecy and will

make all efforts to submit the best offer for this tender in order to win the contract.

O Quattrocchi, Representative for South Asia, New Delhi

• Snamprogetti cannot be accused of manipulating government decisions in its favour. After all it is their job to bag contracts. The people awarding the contract should share all the blame.

Arta Mishra, Cuttack

• Shubhabrata Bhattacharya rightly described the Italian firm's success in bagging the pipeline contract as manipulation. The intimidating conduct of Mr Quattrocchi towards the unnamed cabinet minister was shocking.

M Kanakadurga, New Delhi

Oppressive Force

The incident reported in *Santhals in Terror* (5-11 May) had nothing unusual about it. Police opening fire and killing their critics in the name of encounter is a common phenomenon in our country. The police force has become an instrument of oppression and discipline is a forgotten word. The army has to be called in from time to time to force the police to behave.

Rajesh Sahay, Jhumi, Jharkhand

• The special report was not surprising. The police in Bihar shoot and kill tribals who protest against their exploitation. The picture is not very encouraging in other states too. In Andhra Pradesh police run down innocent farmers and shoot down unarmed Naxalites in the name of encounters. In Gujarat the lawmen participate in loot and arson and in Delhi they are mere spectators when riots break out. Unless steps are taken to discipline our police forces, the people will gradually lose faith in them.

Jayaram, Bangalore

• A few thousand tribals armed with bows and arrows naturally pose a threat to public peace and tranquility. The police tried to restore peace. The killing of 15 people is certainly condemnable but there would have been far more bloodshed had the police remained inactive. In the recent past during the communal violence in Delhi the police were criticised for not acting on time. Instead of blindly criticising the police force, we have to understand the problems of our overworked, underpaid lawmen.

Helen Alberts, Gauhati

Fighting for Peace

MJ Akbar's conversation with Yasser Arafat made absorbing reading ('We are Not Pawns of the Super Powers,' 5-11 May) Yasser Arafat is a revolutionary whose eyes never stop smiling, who rose like a phoenix from the devastated lands of a once beautiful country to lead his homeless flock towards their cherished dream.

Arafat is no ordinary revolutionary. To his countrymen he is a prophet. His method of attaining salvation may be different from Mahatma Gandhi but then times have changed. But very little is known about the private life of this great man except that he spends most of his time in the battlefields shielding his flock from oppressive kings, dictators and Presidents.

Arafat has mellowed with experience and has achieved that elusive mix of militancy and diplomacy to highlight the atrocities perpetrated on his race. Oppression by successive regimes has not dampened his desire to carve out a country for his people. Arafat will surely go down in history as one of the most courageous and



Yasser Arafat

charismatic leaders our century has produced
A S Roy Poona

Our Indisciplined Police Force

The cover story *Police Vs People* (5-11 May) was exhaustive and illuminating, but it failed to spot the real criminals. I am a college student of Ahmedabad who had been asked to vacate the hostel. As one who was connected with the anti-reservation stir, here are my observations.

While it is true that the police spell terror in the city, it would be wrong to blame them for the atrocities for they were only following the dictates of someone at the helm. The real criminals are the chief minister and his trusted lieutenants. They are inciting one community against another and even the police against the people to gain political capital out of the unrest.

Sudipto Sarker Madras

- The cover story was appreciable but I did not like the picture on the cover as it did not bring out the violent mood in Gujarat.

Amrit Sagar Dehingia, Cachar

- The violent incidents in Gujarat in the wake of the anti-reservation stir should be the concern of every citizen since the sentinels of law and order have turned violent. The chief minister should accept moral responsibility and resign forthwith.

Nirmaljeet Singh Walia, Calcutta

- The army had to be called in once

again to discipline the notorious Gujarat police. The act of the lawmen was shameful but even more disturbing was the Gujarat government's hesitancy to discipline the force.

Subroto Nandi Dhanbad

- The situation in Gujarat has been aggravated by the government's haste with which it tried to implement the controversial reservation policy. The issue should have been put to a national debate before implementing. But perhaps the Congress (I) thought that with the massive mandate behind them there was nobody to stop them.

M H Rama Bhubaneswar

- The role of the police in the Gujarat violence brings to my mind the words of Justice AN Mulla of the Allahabad High Court while delivering a judgement in a case. He said "There is one lawless force in India and that is the Indian police force." The people are gradually losing faith in the police since money power seems to work wonders. When an honest constable wants to perform his duties, the higher officers intervene, and when an officer is willing to fulfil his duties the politician is there. It is a vicious circle that needs to be exposed.

S K Mushran, Lucknow

Hindu-Sikh Divide

Harcharan Bains's analysis of *The Hindu Dilemma in Punjab* (5-11 May) perplexed me. Hinduism is anathema to the ruling party. After the partition of the country on religious basis, the Congress adopted secularism, not because they believed in it, but because they wanted to draw in the minority votes. They have succeeded in their designs so far with the result that writers like Harcharan Bains have developed a bias towards Hinduism. Hinduism, in fact, is a way of life and it includes even non-believers unlike most other religions. Yet Hinduism has been the target of other religions from time to time.

The Arya Samaj movement started in the Twenties with the purpose of reforming Hindus by criticising superfluous rituals thereby preventing large-scale conversion to Islam and Christianity. Nobody was worried about conversions from Hinduism but *shuddhikaran* or returning to the Hindu fold became a grave danger to other religions. Among Hindus the Arya Samajites were in the forefront of the freedom movement but after Independence the activities of the Samaj came to a standstill. Therefore it is incorrect to say that the Arya Samaj was perceived as a danger to the Sikh identity.

The Hindus are not in a dilemma in Punjab; they are suffering there and even the administration is apathetic towards them. Most of the so-called writers have turned a blind eye to the problems of the Hindus in Punjab. While the Sikhs who were affected in the violence have been partially rehabilitated, nobody thought of even offering lip sympathy to the Hindu families whose members were mercilessly killed by extremists.

B R Nanda Lucknow

- Harcharan Bains took great pains to explain how the great divide between the Sikhs and the Hindus came about and he seems to blame the Hindus for this. But the author failed to point out that distrust between the Hindus and the Sikhs started only after Bhindranwale rose to fame.

C T Varavan, Madras

- With the Akali Dal functioning as a religious-political front for the Sikhs, Hindus in Punjab are alienated, disillusioned and they suffer from a minority psychosis. Because of their tolerance and liberalism, they cannot match the fanaticism of the Sikhs.

Prabodh Govind, New Delhi

COVER STORY

IS THE WEST BEING WON?

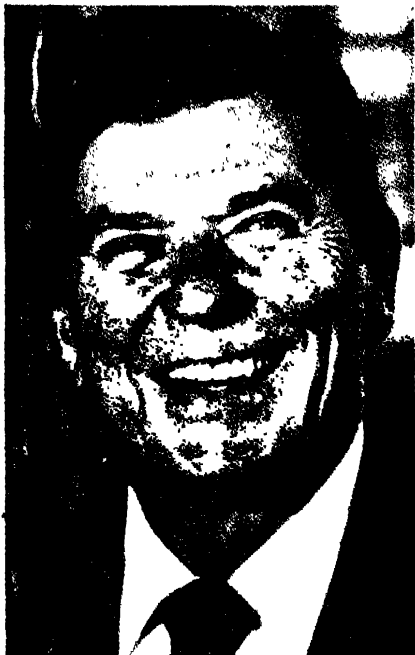
Can Uncle Sam be as trusted a friend of India as Ivan? The results of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the USA will tell. But he will have to tread on slippery ground: There are far too many unresolved issues that continue to bedevil relations between India and the USA, while Indo-Soviet relations have gone from strength to strength. Recent American jubilation over Mr Gandhi's liberal budget and the signing of an Indo-US agreement on transfer of technology may point to a change for the better in Indo-US ties. But Washington's noticeable reluctance to stop arming Pakistan suggests something else. If Rajiv Gandhi, like Indira Gandhi, is bent on neither tilting to the East nor to the West but standing "straight on our feet," will he succeed? SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA examines the question.

"We neither tilt to the east, nor to the west, we stand straight on our feet." These historic words of late Indira Gandhi, at a press conference in New York during her last visit to the United States of America, had summed up India's foreign policy at its best. The present Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi sat on her right, watching intently his

mother's tactful handling of the international press. When he goes to the USA in the second week of June, her voice is bound to resound in his ears. Rajiv Gandhi is going to the USA not only as the youngest Indian Prime Minister, but also as the youngest-ever chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. The changes in India's economic policy, as evidenced in the union budget for 1985-86, have caused merriment in the liberal west. The *Wall Street Journal* had sought to label the young Prime Minister as Rajiv Reagan soon after the budget. According to reports emanating from Washington, Rajiv Gandhi's visit is receiving the top billing in the politico-social circuit in the American capital. Invitations to important events in the US capital are considered a yardstick to measure social status. There has been a mad rush since February to seek invitations to Rajiv Gandhi's functions among the American elite. New Delhi has received an unprecedented stream of dignitaries from Washington in the past six months. From all indications, the Americans are paying renewed attention to India. Efforts to make Rajiv Gandhi's trip to the USA an eventful one have been endless.

Before going to the USA, Rajiv Gandhi, like his predecessors, has given due weightage to India's traditional friendship with the USSR. When the Janata government had

taken charge, there was apprehension that the Indo-Soviet ties would suffer. But when the Janata Party Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, chose Moscow as the first foreign capital to be visited by him, these fears receded. By going to Moscow before visiting any other capital as the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi has kept up the spirit of Indo-Soviet ties. The Russians have assured India of a



President Ronald Reagan



Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

Aloke Mitra

COVER STORY



Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi photographed with Russian leaders during his recent trip to Moscow. (From left to right) Raisa Gorbachyov (though the wife of the Soviet President was not identified in the Russian media, she is one of the few Kremlin spouses to have adopted a prominent role) Sonia Gandhi, Mikhail Gorbachyov and Rajiv Gandhi

Courtesy: Komsomolsky Pravda

billion rouble (Rs 1,100 crores) credit. Mikhail Gorbachyov may not have come to the airport to receive Rajiv Gandhi, but the bonhomie shown by the other Russian leaders was in keeping with the past. India and the Soviet Union have much in common. To begin with the basics, the Siberian birds migrate to India in winter and add colour to this country's fauna. The natural proximity between India and the USSR cannot be wished away. The convergence of strategic interests, the recognition by the Soviet Union of the medium-power role of India in sub-continental politics, the respect shown by the Russians to India's policy of non-alignment, the cooperation in the fields of defence and industry: all these have added up to provide a sound basis for friendship.

Indo-US friendship, on the other hand, has been through a lot of turmoil. The very fact that Washington should choose to arm Pakistan afresh on the eve of Rajiv Gandhi's visit and the fact that the Indian Prime Minister had to comment on the US arming of Pakistan and Washington turning a Nelson's eye on Islamabad's nuclearisation programme during his Moscow trip exposes the shallow foundations on which the new era in Indo-US ties is proposed to be launched. While Washington and New Delhi, respectively, want to improve relations, pragmatism does not seem to guide American policy-makers. The *raison d'être* of foreign policy is to safeguard national interests and not merely to maintain intimacy be-

tween states. While there are pious intentions on both sides, India and the USA do not seem to converge on strategic interests. The ground to be covered by Rajiv Gandhi's visit, therefore, is slippery. By the Rajiv Gandhi regime's economic policy tilt, the west has been impressed. But economic ties are not enough. As long as the Americans keep on treating Pakistan as the constable on the beat in their game of international policing, India and the USA cannot see eye to eye with each other.

There has been a stream of high-level visitors from the USA since Indira Gandhi's death. The late Prime Minister's funeral was attended by a high-powered team comprising the US secretary of state George Shultz and four former American ambassadors to India: Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Sherman Cooper, Robert Gohsen and John Kenneth Calbraith. A visit by former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, followed soon afterwards. Many senators and members of the house of representatives visited India last winter. The US under-secretary of state, Michael Armacost and under-secretary of commerce, Olin Washington, came some months ago. The secretary of the air force, Verne Orr, the commander of the US Pacific forces, Admiral Crowe and Dr Fred Ikle, the under-secretary of defence have visited India over the past few months, raising hopes of cooperation in defence matters. The secretary of commerce, Malcolm Baldrige's recent visit has thrown up

possibilities of better trade ties and increased American investment in this country.

The Americans have done a lot of groundwork prior to the Rajiv Gandhi visit. It is apparent from the trend of talks held by these dignitaries in New Delhi that the USA, while appreciating that the strategic outlook of this country cannot suddenly change, is looking for areas where a common outlook can be found. In the short term, there does not seem to be any convergence between the Indian and the American perceptions over the problems in South Asia. But there is a bid to evolve a better awareness of each other's motivations. It would be unrealistic for the USA to look at India as a proxy for the USSR. In the same vein, appreciation of India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement has to be a cornerstone of future Indo-US relations. As regards Afghanistan, while the USA has to keep on opposing the Soviet presence in that sovereign state, it may not be practical for India to take the USSR to task on this score, howsoever strong Indian public opinion may be on the subject.

The military equipment which the Americans have been giving to Pakistan since 1954, on one pretext or the other, might in all possibility be used against India more than any other neighbour of Pakistan. Since the Fifties, the arms which Pakistan got from America were not designed to be used to fight communism. Certainly the tanks, motorised artillery and other equipment suited for warfare in flat terrain which Pakistan re-

Security for the PM

Perhaps on no other occasion in the past has security been so much in focus during an Indian Prime Minister's trip abroad. Rajiv Gandhi's itinerary which includes Algeria, France, Switzerland and the United States of America, would be, more than anything else, a test for the VVIP security mechanism which, of late, has not had too much to boast about. Already people are apprehensive about the Prime Minister's visit beginning in the first week of June. Though such fears had always lurked in the wake of the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the threats that kept coming in from Sikh extremists elements in the west, the arrest of the five terrorists by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States came as a frightening confirmation. There were indeed groups who were charting elaborate plans to eliminate the Indian Prime Minister during his foreign visit.

The FBI announced on 13 May that it had discovered a plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi. Some of those involved held British passports, others were citizens of the United States. Of the seven involved five were arrested: Vininder Singh, Jasbir Sandhu, Sukhwinder Singh, Jatinder Singh Ahluwalia and Gurpartap Singh Birk. The other two—Tal Singh and Ammand Singh—who are supposed to be the masterminds behind the plot, are absconding and a worldwide search is on for them. The group was exposed in New Orleans where it was plotting to assassinate the Haryana chief minister, Bhupinder Lal, who was then in the United States. On interrogation it was found that the group had other plans which included a bid to kill Indira Gandhi. Besides they had intentions of blowing up specific targets in India including industrial establishments and a nuclear power plant with an end to create civil unrest. Their plans to kill the PM seemed quite elaborate. They were looking for a professional hit man to go in on the target at any point during his visit. Indeed available information suggests that the gunmen would have begun looking for a hitman right from the start of Rajiv Gandhi's foreign trip. All this has attracted the attention of the countries the Prime Minister will be visiting. The French President,

Francois Mitterrand, has already got in touch with the Reagan administration and intelligence setups in both countries are said to be exchanging notes about the security arrangements during Rajiv Gandhi's visit. In England, Scotland Yard has already been alerted about Lal Singh and Ammand Singh, the two absconding terrorists. So have the French police. But the threat, according to experts, comes really from Canada, parts of which have become veritable training grounds for Sikh extremists and from where access to the United States—or even to west Europe—is very easy. According to intelligence sources, two Canadian provinces, British Columbia and Vancouver have become the hotbed of Sikh terrorist activity.

Groups there have been receiving training in arms from, among several others, Van Der Horst, a professional German hit man living in British Columbia. On 12 March this year, Budh Singh Bowel took a plane to London from Vancouver carrying parts of a dismantled sub-machine gun of Israeli make. He was arrested at Heathrow and deported. Some days later, Ranjit Singh Purewal, an associate of Bowel, tried to go to England but was arrested before he could board the flight. On checking it was found that he was carrying the other parts of the same gun. The same Ranjit Singh Purewal is said to have been training Sikh extremists in Pakistan last year. He, incidentally, was also once the security officer of Jaswant Singh Bhullar, an ex Indian army officer, now masterminding Sikh terrorist activity from his base in Washington. It is not known how many such groups or individuals are still operating under cover. Despite all this, there are complaints that the Canadian government is doing little. However, the French and the American governments seem to have taken serious note of the matter and are further tightening up security for Rajiv Gandhi. In any case they are not relying upon the Indian security squads to do the needful.

One team of Indian intelligence officers is already in the United States, sharing the information that the FBI is getting out of the five apprehended terrorists. Another team comprising officials from the

Special Frontier Force (SFF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF) will make an advance trip to all the countries being visited by the Prime Minister to discuss the security arrangements with the police and intelligence setups of the respective governments. The security of the Prime Minister is now the responsibility of a new force called the Special Protection Group (SPG) created only some weeks ago exclusively for the Prime Minister's protection. It is led by S. Subramaniam, the joint director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and has been placed in overall charge of Arun Singh.

In the United States several engagements of the Prime Minister including reception that the Indian community there wanted to give to Rajiv Gandhi have been shelved. In France, after reports from an American intelligence agency that the threat level to the Indian Prime Minister at the Paris air show is rated high, the authorities are thinking of reducing the time he is going to spend at the show to a minimum. Besides, his plans to pilot a Mirage 2000 have now been cancelled.

There are, however, sections in New Delhi itself who are not too sure about how well knit and efficient the security team around the Prime Minister is. On 23 June 1984, the Intelligence Bureau Employees Association (IBEA) had written a letter (No 1/IBFA/84 132) to Indira Gandhi underlining the dangers of having a security setup that was not doing its job properly. "Even your good self," says a part of the letter, "is not immune from their machinations which were manifested during your last trip to the United States sometime in October last when persons meant for your security went on a shopping spree while you had to wait at the airport to take off. Again in utter violation of laid down security norms unaccompanied baggage (and that too consisting of a lot of dutiable articles) was brought on the VVIP flight of your entourage returning to India and the same very senior officers started to find out as to why for the first time ever in history their baggage was stopped."

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

ceived as military aid were not designed to check either the Chinese military movements across the Himalayas or the Russians

USA's military tie-up with Pakistan began at a time when there was absolutely no Soviet presence in the sub-continent. Neither in the economic, nor in the military field was USSR present in South Asia in 1953, when the Americans stepped in with arms to make Pakistan a frontline state against communism. This role was initially mooted for India. But the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru had launched the non-aligned movement, with India as a leading participant in the peace moves in the era of cold war. Having failed to rope in India in the policeman's drill, Pakistan was armed by the USA. Till then, Moscow was somewhat cool towards India. The membership of the British Commonwealth and the country's close economic and cultural ties with the West had made Nehru's India somewhat suspect in the eyes of Moscow. If India and the Soviet Union have a special relationship today, the USA can be given the credit for that: when India saw cold war being brought to its doorstep by Washington's links with Rawalpindi (then the capital of undivided Pakistan), we had to look for friends. Over the years, whether it be on the question of Kashmir's accession to India, the liberation of Goa from Portuguese colonialism or the liberation of Bangladesh, the steadfast stand in India's favour taken by the USSR had been matched by consistent hostility from the USA.

India's relationship with one superpower, the Soviet Union, so far has followed a pattern which normally does not guide relationships between a mediumpower and superpowers. The attempt at world domination by the superpowers is naturally checked by mediumpowers like India on the regional plane. The basic conflict between India and the USA dates back to the Forties on this score. After the second world war, in 1945, America emerged as a superpower, ushering in the American dream of peace and prosperity. Two years later, India emerged as an independent state which had a population greater than the two superpowers combined. India's 5,000-year history, its strategic location and its aspiration for a major role in world politics came in conflict with the concept of the American view. What made matters worse was the American attitude towards nationalist movements. When the world is on the threshold of the 21st century, till date the minority apartheid regime

in South Africa has not merited American condemnation. On the contrary, while the cause of the Namibian people has now been taken up collectively by the non aligned movement, the USA is still blind to realities.

The Soviet Union today has been taken over by a generation of leaders which is post-revolutionary. Soon the post-second world war generation, which has only seen the USSR as a superpower, will rule from Moscow. If Gorbachyov did not mention India in his inaugural address or did not receive the Indian Prime Minister at Moscow airport, then Indian strategic planners have to ponder if a shift in the Soviet stance towards this country has taken place. The bitter reaction against the union budget in the pro-Moscow circles in New Delhi has only shown that the pro-Soviet lobby can also start talking critically about the present government in India. The presence of Soviet troops

Arm-twisting is a word which has to be taken off the American lexicon while dealing with India. When the USA cannot offer much either in terms of arms or technology...the least Washington can do is stop arming Pakistan.

in Afghanistan should make New Delhi sit up because if Pakistan is dismembered and the USSR has a handshaking border with India, then traditional ties notwithstanding, danger would be on India's doorstep. While Russian arms have been made available on easy credit terms, in recent years a phenomenon has been noticed which ought to cause concern. It is well-known that while the Russian equipment comes cheap, the spare parts are not made available on easy terms. India has a medium defence production base, which has produced good equipment for the army in the past. While the aircraft factories have been churning out reassembled aircraft (with some indigenous components), the ordnance factories have played a major role in self-sufficiency. Till now, foreigners have not been posted as advisers in the 35 ordnance factories. In the new armoured car factory which is being

set up at Medak, a group of Russian experts are being stationed. Soviet teams have been going round defence installations in Kanpur and Avadi in recent years. The Mazgaon docks have been offered orders from Russia— to keep India busy in obsolete technology, while advanced technology is offered from abroad. This trend, of allowing Russians to base themselves permanently in ordnance factories, has to be curbed if India wants to take advantage of advanced technology from the West. The main charge which the West has been levying against this country while refusing to transfer technology is that the Russians could get access to such information. While the West is blindly refusing arms and technology to India on the Russian pretext, their policy is slowly driving India into a position in which its dependence on Russia is increasing. It is a vicious circle, which can only be broken if Americans realise India's national perspectives and start selling arms to this country. The recent visit of defence officials from Washington has raised hopes in this regard.

The silver lining in Indo-American relations is visible from the recent memorandum of understanding which has been signed on transfer of technology. Though the areas have not been specified, the very fact that the USA is willing to part with technology to India is heartening. But the Americans may not have anything extra to offer in terms of either technology or armaments.

One thing which the USA has to appreciate while dealing with India is that this nation cannot be browbeaten. When the secretary of commerce, Baldrige, talked of increased American investment in India, in the same breath he hinted that the action against the Union Carbide Corporation, the American multinational responsible for the Bhopal disaster, should be lenient. Arm-twisting is a word which has to be taken off the American lexicon while dealing with India. When the USA cannot offer much either in terms of arms or technology due to constraints put by the American Congress, the least which Washington's policy-planners can do in the short term is to stop arming Pakistan and start appreciating India's national pride.

The Prime Minister's visit to the West comes at a time when India can make a serious bid to win over the West. India has appreciated the West's policies. The time has come for the West to respect India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement.

"India in Improving Her Relations With the USA Does Not Have to Harm Its Relations With Anyone Else"

Harry Barnes, American ambassador to India, talks to M J Akbar

Q: What in your view is the state of Indo US relations on the eve of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit?

A As far as the USA is concerned, one there is great expectation and some excitement about his visit. That comes about because of the substantial increase in the amount of attention that India has attracted in the US in the past six months or so. Secondly, our government has already invested a substantial amount of effort in preparing for his visit. Thirdly, the interest in India which I referred to earlier has been

augmented substantially by the news that has been coming from India about how the new Prime Minister has been going about handling his country's problems, and perhaps this rings an echo among Americans of our own tradition of the first 100 days and the importance of a beginning. He has been portrayed by the Americans as a very appealing figure.

Q: Mr Rajiv, Reagan

A Well, it's the *Wall Street Journal*, I think that used that term in one of its editorials.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is a combination of a newness, a person who hasn't been known on the world stage, coming in recent times into the American consciousness into our awareness at a time when that awareness has been increasing very substantially. There is a lot of sympathy, a lot of sharing you might say, for someone new, someone who is trying.

Q: Can I suggest that one of the reasons for the change in attitude is because Rajiv Gandhi is not Mrs Gandhi?

A When Mrs Gandhi was last in the USA in 1982, and I was there with her, she had evoked I think an exceptionally favourable reaction. It is no secret that there had been Americans who were critical of her. For a broad group of Americans, she overcame much of that. I think I will prefer to put it in a slightly different way, he is obviously not his mother, different, but his own person, and what he is attempting to do, he is attempting to do in his own way.

Q: But Mrs Gandhi did leave a strong partly psychological, partly real resentment in the State Department, what may be called the hangover of 1971?

A Sure, I am not disagreeing with you only, my own perception is that much of that resentment, much of that criticism was overcome by the efforts she made in 1982. And even if there was a residual factor, I did not find that (during my recent visit to USA). The focus is on this new man, what is it he is doing, what he is trying to achieve. It is not a backward look, it is a forward look.



Harry Barnes

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Q What do you think he is trying to achieve?

A That is a question better put to him. I can tell you some of the echoes one hears. Among the first steps which have attracted our attention, two would probably (stand out). One, the change with past practices that his government's budget is seen to represent India has had, at least for American business, a reputation for being a difficult place for foreign business. And with his stress on efficiency, with his stress on reducing obstacles, with his stress on all sectors of the economy—of course the private sector has a particular importance, in terms of our own practice—his stress on all these have struck the US as being important. The second thing that has caught our attention is the initiative he has taken in (improving) India's relations with her neighbours. This has struck the people of the USA as an important sign.

Q The interesting point is, of course, the budget. Foreign policy tends to, at some point or the other, reflect a total ideology. It is a curious parallel, but Mrs Gandhi's turn towards the left in the late Sixties was perhaps a precondition for the Indo-Soviet treaty. Do you think that the present budget is a forerunner of another shift in foreign policy?

A I am not sure whether you are suggesting the economic determinism approach. No, I wouldn't deny any connection between a country's economic approach and its foreign policy, but here, as I understand, what the PM is trying to do is give priority to to use an American phrase get the country going. To the extent that getting the country moving involves greater collaboration with foreign countries, he is trying to figure out what the US has to offer in terms of technology, sales or investment, and then one can draw a line towards closer economic trade relations with the USA. And it automatically follows, therefore, that in terms of India's foreign policy there is a very significant shift. I take it for granted, for example, that India has decided to be on good terms with a number of other countries, including the Soviet Union, which was the partner of the friendship treaty of 1971. In fact it seems to me, at least from our standpoint, that India in improving her relations with us does not have to harm its relations with anyone else.

Q By anyone, else, do you mean Moscow? That's the only "anybody else" you are worried about in any case.

A No. I suppose I can be worried about somebody else. (laughs)

Q What has been the Soviet reaction to the moves?

A Well, I have not seen myself, yet the form of Soviet commentary on the budget, nor any Soviet commentary on any point I mentioned earlier, about India's relations with her neighbours. I might give you something of a little indirect reference—the attacks appearing in certain segments of the Indian press which are well known, such as we say, reflecting Soviet concerns. These



Indira Gandhi with President Reagan in Washington in 1982

have intensified in the recent past. I find that I have been honoured by some of the attacks, some of the attacks.

Q They say you are a CIA agent.

A Judging by the intensity, obviously I must be causing somebody great worry. If I have to be attacked so often. And when some of the older chestnuts which have not been used for a while are being. I was in Calcutta and was talking about general Indo-US relations. What I found interesting was that most of the questions (from the audience) were on Indo-US relations and the prospects of improving relations. At the very end there was one question asked about the history of US arm to Pakistan. This was a question not from an Indian citizen but a representative of another country.

Q What exactly happened at this con-

Both of us (India and the USA) tend to be quite sure that we are right. We both put stress on principles and therefore we have little hesitation in judging others who don't live up to our principles.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is a combination of newness, a person who hasn't been known on the world stage, coming in recent times into the American consciousness, into our awareness at a time when that awareness has been increasing substantially.

frontation with a Soviet diplomat?

A As far as I am concerned, I felt that our experience with the Soviet Union from 1945 onwards gave us very good reasons to be concerned about their intentions

Q Intentions in south Asia?

A Intentions everywhere

Q There was another incident during your visit to Calcutta, on the highway, where there was a security problem. We never got to know what actually happened

A I don't know either. From the report I heard, somebody who had a weapon was detained by the police. Whether that person was armed that day for some purpose connected with what happened on the road, or some other purpose I don't know

Q Do you perceive a threat to your life in Delhi?

A Well, as you know there has been a British deputy high commissioner killed in Bombay and a Soviet embassy officer killed in Delhi. But there are American embassy officials who die in other countries. And so I think it is foolish for anyone to say that a representative of a foreign country is faced with a greater danger (in Delhi). But the perpetrators of the two killings I have mentioned so far, have not been found. So one does not know who is going around doing the harm

Q Is Delhi very high on the security list after this?

A I'll come back to my point before. These days unfortunately nobody knows (where terrorists might strike). But there has not been a history of this kind of a thing in India as far as foreign diplomats are concerned with one exception concerning a Jordanian diplomat

Q There was a missile attack on the US embassy once

A In 1983, I think it was. A rocket was

launched from out here from a rather crude launcher in the evening. It was fortunately deflected by the fence and was subsequently defused. The persons responsible for that have not been found

Q Do you think Indian authorities are less than effective in trying to find this out?

A No I have no basis for judging any particular case. I know from my own contacts with Indian authorities that they have been very helpful. So, if the culprit has not been found, it is simply the fact that he hasn't been found. It does not mean that they (the police) did not take the threat seriously

Q Do you think the Afghan refugees in Delhi are a security threat to other embassies, not necessarily to the Americans?

A I don't see why the Afghan refugees should be a threat to Americans

Q No, to the other embassies, in the sense that they create an atmosphere of violence which then breeds response

A The demonstrations I have seen by the Afghan refugees are peaceful

Q There was an accusation that the Soviet official was killed by the Afghans

A I know I know. There were several accusations. I have no basis to confirm or deny any of them

Q *To go back a little into the history of Indo US relationships, at what time did things start going wrong? I mean in 1947 India and the USA were potential & the best of friends. What happened then?*

A I can probably describe the interim period as a series of curved lines. Some people use the roller coaster (image to define Indo US relations) which is probably a little dramatic

Q Sounds nice, like dominoes

A The roller coaster implies an element of speed which I don't think is really right. But I can pick on some periods

Let's start with the mid fifties when we were freshly immersed in the cold war experience. We felt let down by India and some other countries, in terms of what John Foster Dulles used to call neutralism, a lack of awareness of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Correspondingly from what I can remember from the documents, I think that Pandit Nehru was disappointed and felt let down with our response in the situation, especially when (the problem) came close to India, as exemplified by the Eisenhower offer in terms of assistance to Pakistan. And yet, I am told, when Eisenhower came here in the late fifties, he received a tremendous welcome. And I can assume that despite the unhappiness on both sides, by the end of the decade there was a willingness not only to live with each other but to get along reasonably well. Talking to my predecessor who was here in 1962, the sense I got was that there was a great need here, a need for outside support, particularly during the Chinese invasion, and a corresponding great appreciation for the US response

I feel the Sixties was a period of



Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi (extreme right) at the Kennedy Center, in 1982

relatively good feelings between the two countries. Certainly in terms of American economic assistance to India, it was a high point and projects were launched which had substantial impact on the relations between the two countries. Not as spectacular in the public mind as Bhilai or Bokaro, but it had its impact on two things: agriculture and technology—the IITs.

Q Why does America have this unique ability to sabotage its own efforts by a mistake or two?

A You think the ability is unique only to us?

Q Well, maybe it is something the super powers indulge in all the time.

A Well, I could say it is almost human, and not confined only to the superpowers. Even middle range powers and occasionally developing countries also have that capability.

Q Do you think we have that capability?

A I think it is only human. So if you are human you have that ability just as well as anybody else does. But we certainly have not taken advantage of all opportunities when we should have.

Q Do you agree that the two basic elements about the relationship are the image of India that you have and the other of course is Pakistan around which it all evolves?

A These are the two proven elements. But beside this there is the Indian image of the US.

Q Sure. The question I do want to ask you is: Has the Indian image changed from the days of Krishna Menon?

A He certainly has had the unique ability to cast the negative shadow. I am not talking about whether he should or should not have done so, but the impact has been negative. Yes, I would say the image has definitely changed. And to talk about the period with which I am familiar, I think it began to change about the time of Mrs. Gandhi's visit. Yes, certainly it began to change during her administration starting in 1980, apart from the economic measures we have touched on before. At least there was a sense that there was an evolution in the (Indian) government's approach to the economy.

Then, I think the increasing prominence of Indians of American descent has begun to play (a part).

Q Selig Harrison, in his recent testimony to the Senate, said that the American perception of India still consists of by and large snake-charmers and poverty—neither of which is really true now.

A I have a lot of respect for Selig Harrison and I don't disagree with him. But if you are talking about levels of perceptions, there are undoubtedly Americans who still think of India in terms of the Taj Mahal, snake charmers and the sacred cow. But part of the increased interest in India, even though some of the interest comes by way of, say, a tragic event like the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, and some comes by way of dwelling on the British raj, and other elements as well, like the Gandhi film, the elections,



Former PM Morarji Desai with President Jimmy Carter in New York in 1978

which have all begun to portray India in broader terms—the images are becoming more complex.

Q A little more real.

A I think they are more real sure.

Q What is the reason for this schizophrenic attitude to India? In the sense India's relationships at the travel and communication level are extremely good with the west, and America in particular. I mean nobody wants to migrate to Soviet Russia. Yet there is so much of hostility at the political level.

A I don't see a lot of hostility now. You may see it. I don't see it.

Q Yesterday in Parliament which is the voice of the Indian electorate there were speeches about the USA. don't you call that hostility?

A There were four or five people who participated in the debate.

Q There were four or five speakers including a minister, who was not very complimentary.

A The question is: What is hostility and what is not hostility? I am not surprised that in a country of 700 million people there are a few who are hostile to the United States among them some members of Parliament. There are probably some people in the United States who are hostile to India. But I am talking about the relationship between the two governments. I don't find hostility. I find differences, sometimes sharp differences (not hostility). Maybe there was hostility in 1971, but the three and a half years I have been here, I have not found hostility.

Q One more question on perceptions before we go on to the question of Pakistan. Did the US, at some time, maybe during the Fifties and Sixties, become a victim of the conscious Pakistani propaganda that India was really ruled by the Hindu bania who could not really be trusted, who was shift while Pakistan had the straight good colonel with a moustache and therefore could be trusted?

A My impressions of India begin in the early Fifties and I saw something of India in the

You can argue whether (America's) expectations are reasonable or not, but Americans have expected from India much greater understanding as a fellow democracy. It is clear that Indians have expected the same thing and have been disappointed because they have not got it.

There are undoubtedly Americans who still think of India in terms of the Taj Mahal, snake-charmers, and the sacred cow.

Sixties You may be right, because most of the people I dealt with tended to talk more about the Krishna Menon type of scene, as preaching, moralistic, rather than the other side. But if you generalise on both the countries, there is a very high element of expectation and correspondingly, an element of disappointment if those expectations are not realised. You can argue whether the expectations are reasonable or not, but Americans have expected from India much greater understanding as a fellow democracy. It is clear that Indians have expected the same thing and have been disappointed because they have not got it.

Q Yes, this is certainly one of the reasons why there should be better relations between the two countries. It is curious that the two should be hostile.

A Again you have used the word hostile. I think you are overdoing it.

Q But the point is, why should there not be a better climate? Why? That is one thing that seems very difficult to understand.

A Well, I'll give you my own theory, which draws from the expectations I was talking about. Both of us tend to be quite sure that we are right. We both put stress on principles and therefore we have little hesitation in judging others who don't live up to our principles. So, there is an element of judgment which makes both of us susceptible to condemning each other's lapses in terms of expectations. Of course one of the important accomplishments of the

period which I am familiar with, has been to concentrate in very definitely trying to reduce those areas of misunderstanding, and trying to build up our interests around areas where our ideas coincide, and to take this up very carefully and very seriously.

Q Now, to get back to the central issue that creates problems, and that is Pakistan. What is really the American perception of India and Pakistan?

A That is a huge question. The American perception of India is one of the fundamental elements of recognition of the size of the country. But we realise that India now has a leadership and that leadership is trying to make some very important changes in the way the country is progressing, ranging from education to the norms of society.

Q You approve of these changes?

A Sure. Approve in the sense of thinking that it is important for a country to understand the need for education. We are impressed by the attack on a whole range of problems. As far as Pakistan is concerned we have long felt that it would be good if the people of Pakistan no longer had to live under a martial law regime. And therefore the first steps for a more democratic society in Pakistan.

Q Do you think the recent elections in Pakistan had a great amount of credibility?

A From what I have gathered from people who have been to Pakistan recently it seems to me the mood has changed, there is a sense of things happening and that there is an expectation that a bit of a process has now begun that offers some hope of a transition back to democracy.

Q Would you accept an election in America where the Democrats were not allowed to contest?

A I am not talking about absolute standards. All I'm talking about is that there does seem to be a change in Pakistan which people there so I am told perceive as hopeful.

Q Given Afghanistan and seeing the importance you give to both countries, why don't you see the subcontinent as a frontline area against "Soviet expansion" rather than just treating Pakistan as a frontline country?

A We do in the sense that we do try to stress in our conversations with Indian officials that we think that the implications of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan should be the worry of the subcontinent and not just confined to Pakistan.

Q What do the Indian officials say then?

A Mostly they say that they have a different perspective. That the problem is one which is on the Pakistani border with Afghanistan.

Q Would you agree that it is in India's self interest to see that the Soviet troops remain in Afghanistan?

A My impressions after talking to Indian officials is that India objects in principle to foreign troops occupying other countries and their position therefore would be that the Soviet troops should leave Afghanistan.

Q That is the official position. But the



Jawaharlal Nehru with President John F. Kennedy in Washington

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trouble with foreign policy is that there is a great amount of difference between what you are saying and what you are thinking

A I don't myself see any particular advantage to India from the Soviet troops remaining in Afghanistan

Q I can see a great amount of advantage it immediately stops Pakistani troops from destabilising Punjab

A Without commenting on your implications it seems to me that India, which has always said that superpowers should not get involved in the subcontinent, could well have an overriding interest that the Soviets leave Afghanistan

Q That's on the theoretical level

A Well it is obviously India's decision. It seems to me that when you have a superpower on the subcontinent for the last couple of years it does raise some questions on the long run

Q Yes but if we did not have suspicions about America's role in the destabilisation process the Afghanistan issue may have been settled earlier

A Well, besides objecting to the question of America's participation in the destabilisation process it seems to me that India has to be first a judge of its own interests to the extent that its self interest is threatened by the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. From our standpoint the implications of the Soviets moving out beyond the generally recognised borders after the Second World War has implications for the whole region and it to be treated with great seriousness

Q How are you going to allay Indian suspicion about the American role in Punjab

A Well again I am not sure what suspicions you have in mind. No one from the government of India has raised any suspicions to me for all these months

Q But you know the minister for foreign affairs said in Parliament (and I have the exact quote) that United States of America is showing over indulgence to the terrorists and that is as direct as anything

A The minister has not expressed that to me. I don't know what the minister is talking about. No official of the government of India has expressed to me any concern over over indulgence. So I don't know what the minister is talking about

Q The minister said it in Parliament

A I take your word for it. I am not questioning that the minister said it. All I am telling you is that the minister of state for external affairs has said nothing to me. The American ambassador in India about the United States being over indulgent. So therefore I do not know what the minister means by what he said in Parliament and therefore I don't know what suspicions I have to allay because I don't know what these suspicions are

Q Let me see if I can convey them. The suspicions are that in conjunction with Pakistan, you are trying to weaken India

A Nonsense, nonsense, absolute nonsense

Q It is a common perception



The Round-the-World balloonists along with US ambassador to India Harry Barnes (extreme left) and Indira Gandhi

A It may be a common perception but it is absolute nonsense and a lot of people believe that kind of absolute nonsense. If they really think that a country like ours is either so foolish or so stupid as to harbour that sort of intention, then I think there is nothing that can be done. But I have much greater faith in the people of India than your question seems to indicate

Q Instances like the statement made by some Sikhs in the Congress get a lot of headlines

A I go back to what I said about the problem of perceptions. I think there is a significant difficulty, and it works both ways. I say the people who blew up the incident the other day have little understanding about how the United States Congress works and for that matter have little understanding about the importance of free speech in the United States. And therefore it shows that we have to and hopefully those in India who want a relationship with the US also have to try to help people to understand more adequately what the US is like. We were talking earlier about American images of India being limited to some Americans thinking of India as a country of snake charmers and poverty. This is a situation of inadequate understanding

Q What are the basic images you found troublesome?

A You just cited one—that somehow the US is seeking to destabilise India. The second one is everything that is said in the US has the support of the government of the US. Which comes as a strange perception from the people who pride themselves on being able to speak freely. Some of the people who make these statements have trouble in understanding that free speech is free speech

Q To continue on the subject of suspicions, the feeling is now growing that the US would now like to see a much stronger

I am not surprised that in a country of 700 million people there are a few who are hostile to the US, among them some Members of Parliament. There are probably some people in the US hostile to India.

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Indira Gandhi addressing the National Press Club of Washington during her visit to the USA in 1982

Rajiv Gandhi is obviously not his mother, different, but his own person, and what he is attempting to do, he is attempting to do in his own way... The focus is on this new man, what is it he is doing, what he is trying to achieve. It is not a backward look, it is a forward look.

Pakistan and perhaps a Pakistan with nuclear potential

A I think there is a certain limit I don't know how useful it is to go on commenting on all these absurd assumptions. But there is one thing clear about the US—that for about 10 years we have devoted substantial efforts to limiting proliferation of nuclear weapons. An Act was passed by the Congress and that has caused a lot of problems with a variety of countries. There should be no mistake about the USA's position on the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Q But when the Pakistani scientist who was stealing whatever was required is released

A The individual, under the terms of the law, was in fact handled exactly as he should have been. As a result of that sort of case, and some others, the government is seeking new legislation. At the time of the crime, it was a clear violation of certain statutes which at the time when legislation was adopted, were considered minor charges. There was nothing recovered and actually nothing really taken, but seeing the seriousness of the case we are now trying to get a legislation passed.

Q What would you say was, in the last three decades, the cardinal determinant in the US perception of the subcontinent?

A I find it hard to pin down one point. But if I had to take just one, I would take the more recent history and I will most probably take Afghanistan. I say this because from the US standpoint it represents such a break with the past in terms of our perception of the Soviet threat and because it has brought about a resumption of relations with Pakistan which had been suspended during the Carter period. And the very fact that the Carter administration, despite all its differ-

ence with Pakistan sought to revive those relations. I am still of the opinion that the Indian viewpoint and the US viewpoint are very similar in the sense that we both believe that the Soviet Union has to take its troops out of Afghanistan. The difficulties and differences come in the area of implications of how it is to be accomplished and what actions are or are not justified in the light of that.

Q There were reports about the use of Karachi as a facility for the US navy, and a tentative base at Peshawar—would you deny that as kite flying?

A I used the word nonsense earlier. I think I might as well use the same word again. I don't know how many times we have to deny this. It is part of the same trash that is being put out—it is just the recycling of old chestnut. It is not true today, it was not true last week and was not true a year ago.

Q And hopefully not true in the future either?

A Your hopes are justified.

Q The statement that was made last October by the US ambassador in Pakistan that the US would support Pakistan against aggression from the east

A These were words again that were taken out of context. Our purpose and subject of assistance to Pakistan is quite clear.

Q Are you saying then that Indo US interests are in fact converging?

A If I were to draw a diagram, the lines would be moving closer to each other instead of diverging. There is always going to be a gap but I think what is recognised most of the time is the set of fundamental interests that we share. It is understandable through the thesis that if you do have high expectations it is inevitable that there will be disappointment.

A Troubled Past

Nikhil Chakravartty traces the course Indo-American relations have taken since the independence movement

There is a mythology about the United States in our country that having revolted from British rule, it must have always been friendly towards the Indian people kept in subjugation by the same imperial power. In 1909, when the militant wing under Tilak had already begun the crusade against foreign rule, when the massive militant *swadeshi* campaign by the Congress defeated the British designs to partition Bengal, when the radical revolutionaries from Aurobindo at one end to Lajpat Rai at the other from Har Dayal to Subramanaya Bharati, raised the national movement to new heights of militancy, at that very moment how did the US government react? President Theodore Roosevelt spoke in glowing terms on 18 January 1909 about the civilising mission of the British *raj* in India "A greater feat than was performed under the Roman empire" adding that "the successful administration of the Indian empire by the English has been one of the most notable and most admirable achievements of the white race during the past two centuries." Kipling could not have done better in selling the white man's burden. The lot of Indian emigrants in USA in those days, estimated to be about 11,000, incidentally most of them were Sikh peasants from Punjab—was degrading, often victims of mob violence. And in 1917, the US government totally banned immigration from India.

Rabindranath Tagore who was a tireless wanderer had nowhere encountered the humiliating treatment as he met at the hands of US immigration officials in 1929. He cancelled his trip bitterly saying "Jesus could not get into America because first of all he would not have the necessary money, and secondly he would be an Asiatic." In an earlier visit, he was sought to be scared by a "detective agency" that some Indians were plotting to kill him. When Tagore protested, he was accused in a case of having taken money from the Germans. In 1921 after he had raised his voice against the British massacre at Jalianwalabagh, he was treated in the USA with "unmitigated discourtesy," to quote his own words.

Gandhi when invited to visit USA after the London Round Table Conference in 1931 declined saying "It is difficult to wean the golden calf from the worshippers of Mammon."

With World War II came a significant phase of US interest in the Indian situation. Gen Eisenhower as the Allied supremo frankly urged that 'we have to hold the Indian bastion at all costs, otherwise a junction between the Japanese and German forces would be accomplished through the Persian Gulf.' President Roosevelt, sensitive to American public opinion and himself a strong Democrat bluntly wrote to Churchill 'The feeling is almost universally held that the deadlock has been caused by the unwillingness of the British government to concede to the Indians the right of self government' and warned that if the Cripps negotiations in April 1942 collapsed and the Japanese successfully invaded India "the prejudicial reaction on American public opinion can hardly be overestimated."

This British defence of its empire against American proings did not,

however, outlive the war at the end of which it was USA which emerged as the leading imperial power with Britain playing second fiddle to it. The first US ambassador to independent India, Dr Henry Grady, said in December 1947 'It is tremendously important to keep India on our side in the world struggle.' The "world struggle" that Dr Grady referred to was the new cold war that had already begun. The Truman Doctrine of crusade against communism had been proclaimed nine months earlier.

The new Indian government under Jawaharlal Nehru began with sincere expectations from the USA. The first rude shock came when in all innocence Nehru referred the Pakistani aggression into Kashmir to the Security Council, hoping to get justice. But it was found that throughout the US sided with Britain in backing Pakistan against India despite the fact that Warren Austin, the then US representative at the UN, had to concede that Kashmir's sovereignty had passed to India with the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian Union.



Jawaharlal Nehru with Indira Gandhi in New York in 1956



Indira Gandhi with Ronald Reagan

The basis of America's pro-Pakistan policy is to be traced essentially to its global cold war strategy. Sir Olaf Caroe, the well known British ideologue for retaining the imperial hold on what he called the "northern screen" states along the Soviet border, actually went to Washington to hand over his know-how to the burgeoning American imperial power and confessed that he had "more than once flattered myself that J.F. Dulles' phrase, 'the northern tier' was the product of Caroe's thinking." The wiser among the cold war veterans even at that stage were, however, cautious about this reverse line of arming Pakistan. As early as 1950 at a banquet for Liaquat Ali Khan, it was George Kennan who warned against such an adventure: "We must observe the utmost care not to enter into relationships which might become the subject of misunderstanding either here or in the partner country or elsewhere. Or, which we could not be sure of carrying through to a successful conclusion satisfactory to all concerned."

The American obsession about getting military bases in Pakistan starts from those early days. In September 1951 the then US air force chief of staff told Chester Bowles, about to come to India as the American ambassador: "We are going to give you some trouble out there in India because we have our eye on bases in

Pakistan." The famous tilt had already begun.

In October 1949, when Nehru paid his first visit to USA as India's Prime Minister, he went with hopes and expectations. In a confidential note before his visit, he wrote to his sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, then India's ambassador in Washington: "I want to be friendly with the Americans but always making it clear what we stand for." In his speech to the joint session of US Congress, he made the historic pronouncement: "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral." He thought his American visit was "a strange melange."

Let it be noted that Nehru went first to the United States and his Soviet visit came later, actually after his visit to China. The American reaction to Nehru's visit in 1949 was interesting. At the public level, Adlai Stevenson welcoming him to Chicago acknowledged that Nehru belonged to the "company of historic figures who wore a halo in their own lifetimes." On the official side, Dean Acheson noted as the secretary of state, that Nehru was "one of the most difficult men with whom I have ever had to deal."

The years that followed brought out the widening gap between India's independent stand on foreign and

economic policies and the dictates of American global strategy and conservative economic policy. On 10 November 1953, Nehru in a personal letter to the then Pakistan premier, Mohammed Ali, warned against the imminent military alliance between US and Pakistan. "If such an alliance takes place, Pakistan enters definitely into the region of cold war. That means to us that the cold war has come to the very frontiers of India. It means also that, if real war comes, this also reaches the frontiers of India. This is a matter of serious consequence to us, who have been trying to build up an area of peace where there would be no war whatever happens elsewhere. It must also be a matter of grave consequence to us, you will appreciate, if vast armies are built up in Pakistan with the aid of American money." And then the gentle hint: "All our problems will have to be seen in a new light."

Two days later, on 12 November 1953, Nehru came out explicitly in a letter to Panikkar that "in effect Pakistan becomes practically a colony of the United States" and correctly assessed: "The United States imagine that by this policy they have completely outflanked India's so called neutralism and will thus bring India to her knees. Whatever the future may hold, this is not going to happen. The first result of all this will be an extreme dislike of the United States in India. As it is, our relations are cool."

A bitter stage had already been reached when Nehru wrote in an official note: "I dislike more and more this business of exchange of persons between America and India. The fewer persons that go from India to America or that come from the United States to India, the better." And added "We have had quite enough of American superiority." This was the period when John Foster Dulles had branded non-alignment as "immoral."

The US arms aid to Pakistan was universally taken in India as a deliberate threat to India. Krishna Menon's famous retort to the US plea that the arms to Pakistan were meant to fight Soviet menace was that he had not yet known of any guns that would fire only in one direction. Even Rajagopalachari, then the leader of the Swatantra Party with its avowed pro-American bias, wrote in 1959: "And what a curious game it is for America to lend or give to each country in the name of making an anti-communist bastion, but really the defence expenditure in each country is for defence or offence against the other country, as between India and Pakistan." It was the

very same outlook which had led Nehru to refuse US arms when Eisenhower offered it to Pakistan.

The Chinese antipathy towards Nehru led to an American opening towards India. President Eisenhower visited New Delhi in 1959. Three years later, when the Chinese military aggression took place in October 1962, the Indian foreign policy was in a shambles. Nehru wrote to President Kennedy for urgent military assistance and even a VOA deal was almost pushed through. The Anglo-American squeeze could be seen in the Duncan Sandy's mission which wanted to virtually lop off Kashmir for Pakistan. Within a few months, however, Nehru recovered to salvage non-alignment. But the weakness of the Indian position both politically and militarily was apparent.

After Nehru's death in 1964, the US calculation was that India would be more manageable under Shastri. This could be seen when Lal Bahadur Shastri got rid of T.T. Krishnamachari from the cabinet on a flimsy allegation but actually because TTK was firmly opposed to the devaluation of the rupee as demanded by the World Bank. Shastri had a very short-lived innings, but even in course of that, his visit to the USA was cancelled by Washington because of the stand he had taken on US policy in Vietnam.

When Indira Gandhi came to power in January 1966, preparations were afoot for an early visit to Washington. In March 1966, she went to USA, her first foreign trip as Prime Minister. There was euphoria all round and in a confidential strategy paper, President Johnson was briefed by the state department that future US aid were to be "linked quite directly to Indian performance on self-help measures" which specifically in the US perception included among other things, "basic changes in economic policy as recommended by the IBRD (World Bank) and IMF, designed to free up the economy, stimulate the private sector, stimulate exports and encourage private foreign investment through import liberalisation, related fiscal measures and incentives to private enterprise."

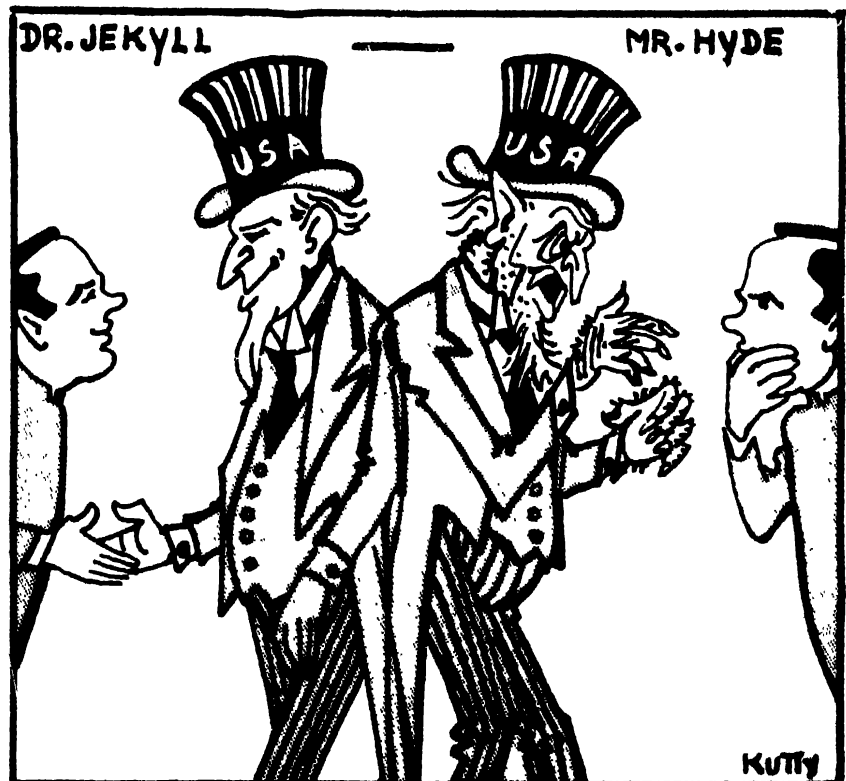
Interestingly, John Lewis, the then director of USAID, sent from Delhi a confidential assessment to the White House in which he claimed that Indira Gandhi "has formed around her what is potentially the best Indian cabinet yet from our viewpoint" making a special reference to the exclusion of TTK, and was apprecia-

tive of "the way the best pair, Subramaniam and Asoke Mehta, have taken charge of economic policy." He also added that Sachin Chaudhuri (then finance minister) was "a strong third" and that "Chavan and others support the Subramaniam-Mehta initiative." John Lewis, however, tried to spell out "a few cautionary notes," one of which was: "The significant opposition, both within the Congress and outside, is all from the left, that in the traditional Indian political lexicon the good and bad economic labels are almost inverse of our own, and that even a government trying to reform this view of things cannot escape it instantly." Another significant caution was: "Indira's own personality—she has a proud Nehru streak, and like many of her countrymen, takes much more kindly to being negotiated or reasoned with than lectured at."

Forearmed with such thorough briefing, President Johnson did his best to win Indira Gandhi over. Her kitchen cabinet was certainly a great help and among its chefs besides Subramaniam and Asoke Mehta, was her principal secretary L.K. Jha who is still continuing at the same job as could be seen from his quiet meeting with President Reagan on 25 May to "structure" Rajiv Gandhi's imminent visit to Washington.

By June 1966, the result of this bentente was evident: the government devalued the rupee at the behest of the World Bank without even taking the Congress party high command into confidence. It was a political disaster that Indira Gandhi realised after the setback to her party's fortunes at the next year's general election. The kitchen cabinet found itself jobless. The next four years (1967-1971) saw memorable changes with Indira Gandhi fighting the old guard syndicate on radical internal policy issues while in the international sphere, the US tilt became more and more pronounced towards Pakistan, culminating in the steaming in of the Seventh Fleet up the Bay of Bengal in December 1971 when India, undaunted, lent a helping hand to the freedom-fighters in East Pakistan which led to the birth of Bangladesh. Whatever might have been the American public feelings against the brutalities of the Pak military junta in Bangladesh, the US administration left nobody in doubt about its unreserved support for the very same junta.

As a significant caveat, one has to view the US response to Indira Gandhi's Emergency. While the JP-led opponents of Indira Gandhi were claiming full support from the US in defence of Indian democracy, it is worth noting that Washington



showed no appreciable displeasure with the Emergency. Rather Paul Kreisberg, politically the most active member of the US diplomatic mission in New Delhi at the time, was very close to the Emergency establishment, and could even get Indira Gandhi and Sanjay to come and dine with the American ambassador—no doubt, a high point in diplomatic goings-on during the Emergency.

The brief spell of Janata raj hardly made any difference to the US policy. Neither Morarji's "genuine non-alignment" nor Nani Palkhiwala's ambassadorial acumen could make Washington change its stand against supplying spares for the Tarapore nuclear reactor in clear violation of contractual obligation. In contrast, Pakistan has been granted a permanent waiver to the Symington Amendment that debars US aid to the countries suspected of going nuclear. President Carter's visit to New Delhi and Morarji Desai's visit to Washington were occasions for rhetorical flourish but could bring about no substantial thaw despite Morarji's secret parleys with Moshe Dayan. The basic US position has been one of backing Pakistan to the hilt while keeping India in a state of instability—internal and external—which is to prevent India from playing her rightful role in world affairs.

Indira Gandhi's second term as Prime Minister (1980-1984) coincided with the first term of Reagan in the White House. This has been the phase of heightened cold war and revival of the Dulles-cum-

McCarthyite anti-communist crusade whose obvious beneficiary in our neighbourhood has been Pakistan, where sophisticated US weapons have been pouring in, in the same measure as was despatched to Iran under the Shah, and for the very same objective: turning the country into the American military depot in the strategically sensitive "arc of crisis" stretching from Saudi Arabia to the Karakoram about which the Pentagon has always been worried.

Since India under Indira Gandhi refused to fall in line with the US strategic perception and has stood out for India's independent foreign policy line, undeterred by the nuclear outpost in Diego Garcia or the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) and central command or by the not-so-clandestine plans for bases in Pakistan, it is not surprising that the Prime Minister of India's visit to Washington in 1982—with all its fanfare—could bring no substantive change in Indo-US relations. The policy of so-called liberalisation pursued by India in the last ten years has made only marginal impact in the form of IMF credit and at the same time amounted to no shot in the arm for the Indian economy as a whole. On the contrary, in the international arena, India's increasing importance as the leader of the non-aligned movement has brought a conspicuous demarcation from Reagan's bellicose cold war strategy.

Viewed in this historical background there seems to be little prospect of an enduring Indo-American rapprochement in the im-

mediate future. If Washington's policy of arming Pakistan and acquiescing in its going for the bomb is not to be reversed, no intelligent observer can expect any change in New Delhi's defence or foreign policy. India certainly needs hi-tech as it prepares to enter the 21st century, and the US transnationals are desperately in search of markets. Here too India is in a position to bargain as Japan with its technological advance is equally interested in the Indian market. The Union Carbide's scandalous negligence responsible for the Bhopal tragedy has alerted every Indian about the need for safeguards against any open-door policy towards transnationals.

One important feature of the present US administration—perhaps its most important one—is that it is the most ideologically committed government in the world today. Its cast-iron conservatism has gone to the extent of threatening to monitor voting by every developing country before deciding on extending aid or credit to it. The global economic strategy pursued by the Reagan administration is sharpening its contradictions with Western Europe and Japan in a manner and to a degree never seen before.

In such a crucial situation, there are two options open before India to reshape its relations with the United States. It can establish firm bridgeheads with Western Europe and Japan, and thereby build an united front for a common strategy to deal with the Reagan administration's global strategy, economic and political. This was the perspective behind the seventh NAM summit's call for an international conference on money and finance with universal participation. The other option open before India is to take to the Sadat road. Once this is indicated, there could be no dearth whatsoever of getting economic and defence aid from Washington. No conditionality, no haggling would be necessary. The four countries in the world today with the most mismanaged economies—Israel, Egypt, Pakistan and Chile—are the recipients of the most generous American bounties.

It is upto Rajiv Gandhi to decide which of these two paths he should follow in keeping his rendezvous with President Reagan—the one charted out by Indira Gandhi or the other taken by Anwar Sadat. The one important consideration before him will of course be that he will have to carry with him this great nation of seven hundred millions proud of its self-respect and fiercely jealous about its independence.



US vice president George Bush (right) with former Indian vice president M. Hidayatullah (second from right) and P.V. Narasimha Rao (left) at Delhi airport

Is India Drifting the American Way?

R P Kaushik examines whether Rajiv Gandhi is ushering in a capitalist economy

Is India under Rajiv Gandhi drifting to the "right" or to the "left"? is an interesting point to start a debate. The anomaly in such a proposition will however be that the present government has been in power only for six months and it is too short a period to judge a government's intentions and obtain any definitive conclusions. But the previous governments of Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi have not lacked the lustre of such animated debate either. To that extent there has been a remarkable continuity to this dialogue.

During the short period of Rajiv Gandhi's administration the budget, the liberalisation of taxes, new opportunities for investments, allurements for foreign capital for investment, hectic efforts to negotiate bilateral trade relations with the United States and other countries, an

attempt to share high technology and above all to remove the government bottlenecks and controls have given rise to speculations that the present government tends to drift to the right or the American way.

From what little one gathers at the moment, one can say that the present government under Rajiv Gandhi has no intention to pursue a policy which would be steeped in hypocrisy, false propaganda and ideological traps. Nevertheless, such are the aerodynamics of kite flying in the journalistic world that it can be made to look drifting into any direction by popular writings. The large network of the media keeps one hypothesis or the other afloat in the air and this keeps its industry churning the wheels into less meaningful exercises.

How to galvanise the Indian economy? For one assumes that the dividends of such an economy would reach the common man. If a budget is

a fiscal statement of the policies to be pursued, how does it provide individual incentives, tax relief in order to escape the parallel economy and provide multitarious avenues to rejuvenate the economic system. One views that the present budget is a modest attempt to respond to such problems. Two apprehensions have been expressed regarding the budget. One, the deficit and second, the inflation potential. Although these are the subjects on which economic experts alone can enlighten us, it appears that an undue criticism has been levelled and judgement has been given that this would lead India towards a capitalist economy. In March the budget deficit was indicated to the tune of Rs 3,349 crores. Earlier it was assumed that the deficit for the year 1984-85 was going to be Rs 1,773 crores and it has now risen to Rs 3,985 crores. Budgetary deficits are discouraging signs but such

Jawaharlal Nehru with President Eisenhower in Washington during his trip to the USA



pressures on the budget are no new developments. We have experienced them in the past and are likely to experience them in future too. The moot point would still be whether by resorting to some policy-changes, the government would be in a position to generate vigour in the economic system of the country. By sheer collaboration with foreign countries, one does not necessarily bring in a capitalistic system. The Soviet Union has benefited a great deal by hiring the technology of a Dallas firm in the USA for its oil exploration in Siberia. The pipeline through Europe seeks further collaboration with the French and the German companies. The People's Republic of China has been carrying out its offshore drilling operations in the China Sea with the help of American companies. Besides, there are other trade and commercial transactions: the famous grain deal of the Soviet Union with the United States during Carter's administration, which have been carried out for their economic well-being.

Hence, the prospects of Indo-US relations in trade and commerce need not frighten us. They should be facilitated on bilateral economic equations. India should take an advantage of the situation that might develop among the principal allies of the United States in the west. As one can see, there has been, and there is likely to be, an erosion of the central economic authority of the United States vis-a-vis its allies in the west. The countries like Canada, France, West Germany and Japan have already begun seeking their independent role in the economic sphere with the other countries of the world. Their moves are quite independent of the American calculations. The European Economic Community (EEC) has also sought its avenues of new equations with the outside world as well as among themselves which are not always beneficial for the interests of the United States. Hence, India's explorations in the western world where the industrial and technological superiority can help its economy to grow should be evolved. What may not be possible for India is an unbridled self-serving economic policy of the United States in this part of the world. The words of the famous economist Jahare/ in Amerzegar are worth noting:

"As a matter of plain common sense the only way the poorer countries can ever catch up with the richer nations is to grow a lot faster, continue to consume a lot less, and invest a lot more... and since their material progress is greatly inter-



Indira Gandhi with the US secretary of state George Shultz

wined with western prosperity they would be fools to wish to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."

It is in this spirit that India is willing to share its economic policies with the countries of the west, and this need not necessarily be construed that we are drifting towards a capitalist system of economy. A well-studied and a well-planned economic venture on an equitable basis with the United States will be the best way to start a bilateral economic dialogue. It may not be a bad idea to suggest to the United States that economic relations should not be linked with the political overtones of the two nations, particularly in the field of foreign affairs. India has however reiterated its position for establishing a new international economic order. The United States, on the other hand, has maintained its position which was reflected by Roger D. Hanson in an article, *North-South Policy*, published in *Foreign Affairs* in the summer of 1980. The article suggested that the United States and its western allies have successfully diverted the south's demand for structural change into an obsessive concern for "basic needs." The United States is thus prepared for marginal pragmatic adjustments but not for overhauling the system. This is one area in which India and the United States have not seen eye to eye.

In the area of diplomacy, the perceptions of the two countries, India and the United States, have

been somewhat different. The two countries have perceived their national interests vis-a-vis the world at large in a different manner. The present administration in America believes in the sale of armaments as a means to narrow the gap between its security interests and unilateral power. It does so by strengthening friendly countries, revitalising the mutual security relationship by fostering regional alliances in the world. This goes against the interests of India which has fostered a common outlook to solve complex regional problems as a part of the Non-Aligned Movement. The United States views with considerable alarm the fulfilment of its two immediate objectives. Its top priority is the revitalisation of the North Atlantic Alliance by installing Pershing-11 missiles in Europe with nuclear warheads. Second, America wants to achieve a superior military and political equilibrium in South-West Asia by pumping in military and economic aid to Pakistan which has once again gone against the vital interests of peace and security of India in this part of the world.

India's opposition to the nuclear policy of the two superpowers is only too well-known to deserve an extensive discussion. The United States perceives the Soviet Union as its principal adversary. In its estimate, the Soviet Union seems to be storming all over the world. To them, Soviet Union maintains a powerful blue water navy to position a large flotilla in the Indian Ocean to acquire bases in Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, as well as access to the elaborate port facilities at Scawranh Bay in Vietnam. On the other hand, the Soviet Union believes that United States has funneled armaments to Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The United States aid to North Yemen, Oman and Somalia are viewed in the same vein. The construction of a large naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and the maintenance of a large naval task force in the Indian Ocean are steps that have caused considerable strains in US-Soviet relations.

India has always viewed with considerable alarm the developments of this superpower rivalry nearer home. It has often expressed its protest and resentment against such developments in the region which pose a threat to India's security. It is, therefore, no mean a challenge for India to cope with such developments and challenges while at the same time trying to maintain its economic and diplomatic relations with countries like the United States.

An Indo-French Culture Hug

The year of India in France will help strengthen mutual ties

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi might not at all find himself in alien surroundings when he inaugurates the Festival of India—the year of India in France, as the French prefer to call it—at the Trocadero palace in Paris on 7 June. There will be elephants and camels caparisoned in traditional style more than 200 Indian artistes—dancers, musicians, singers, balladeers, acrobats, jugglers who will make their entry through huge hand painted arches, and into a market place filled with stalls selling typically Indian snacks, fireworks and music. In the air will be fragrances from back home. The inaugural has been christened “Mela” and it will look like one—a microcosm of India transplanted in a part of Paris. Even the Seine will be given an Indian touch. *Divas* (lamps) will be set afloat and the water from the Ganga will be mixed in it “symbolising the meeting of the two countries.” This is exactly what the festival of India in France is meant to be—a generous culture hug.

The year long celebration of India in different parts of France will be organised under five main categories:

- The non classical performing arts, most of whose items will be staged at the *Maison des Cultures du Monde* (the House of World Cultures) in Paris. This section will include percussion concerts based on different Indian styles, Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, the Chhau dance from Mayurbhanj in Orissa, a special performance by villagers from Nagaland and a “Ras Lila” by children. There will be Baul geet from Bengal, Chhakri from Kashmir, songs of the desert from the Langas, Nars and Man gayars of Rajasthan, Yakshagana and Kathputli performances and a special rendering of the *Mahabharata* in song, dance and mime by Tee Jan Bai, one of the famous exponents of Pandavani, a narrative art from Madhya Pradesh. The non classical performing arts section will also include a workshop on traditional Indian hairstyles as depicted in temple sculptures right from the first century AD.

- The Avignon festival, which is held every year in the south of France and is a highly rated occasion on the world cultural calendar. The centre stage at this festival of dance,

drama and music will this year be held by artistes from India.

- The Paris autumn festival, which will be held from 17 September to 19 October. This festival, like the one at Avignon, is traditionally known for the rich fare it offers to connoisseurs of art and culture the world over. The events in this programme will be staged at the Paris Theatre du Rond Point which is giving up three of its halls, to artistes from India. Among those who will perform at this festival



The Kathakali from Kerala

al are Bhimsen Joshi, Amjad Ali Khan, Kishori Amonkar, Nasir Aminuddin Dagar, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, Birju Maharaj, Bismillah Khan, N. Rajam, Zia Molauddin Dagar and Zakir Hussain. The list of performers also includes a couple of “young and promising” dancers like Malavika Sankar and Prasadashri Gopal, both of whom perform the Bharatnatyam.

- The section on exhibitions and Indian films, spread over eight months from September 1985 to June 1986, when the curtains are rung down on the festival, will put up exhibitions of painting, photography and the living arts. In addition it will hold a retrospective on Indian cinema with special reference to the stars from the Bombay film industry. This programme will be held in and around the

Georges Pompidou Centre. Two painters—Vishwanathan and Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh—will exhibit their work and French photographer Henri Cartier Bresson’s photographs will be on display. The works of three contemporary Indian artists—Bhupen Kakar, Sudhir Patwardhan and Arpita Singh—will also be on show in the penultimate month of the festival. The main attractions, however, will be Ravi Shankar and Zubin Mehta, both of whom will perform at the Salle Pleyel in Paris.

- Cinema buffs in France will, perhaps for the first time, get an opportunity to view on a wider canvas, contemporary Indian cinema. All films chosen for the Indian panorama section during the 10th International Film Festival in Delhi in January 1985 will be screened in Paris. These include *Maya Mrida*, Mohan Joshi, *Haazir Ho* and *Kahan Kahan Se Ghar Ghar*. Among films selected from south India are *Elipattavam*, *Istapphan*, *Ghatashraddha* and *Thaneet Thaneet*. There will be a separate section on famous personalities in Indian cinema which includes K.L. Saigal, Balraj Sahni, Waheeda Rehman, Nargis, Meena Kumari, Dilip Kumar and Amitabh Bachchan. There will be a retrospective on the new cinema in India. The stars under this category comprise Shabana Azmi, Soumitra Chatterji, Smita Patil, Om Puri and Naseeruddin Shah. Most of the film personalities are expected to be there in Paris for the festival.

- Seminars and conferences section, which will be taken care of by the Association for Dialogue between Cultures (ADBC). The seminars will involve several areas and subjects including the media, universities, research institutions, industrial houses, Indian literature, the economy, philosophy, business management, development and planning, science and technology.

These five categories, in the view of the organisers of the Festival of India in France, would present a comprehensive view of India and its people—something which the man on the street in France has not as yet had a look at. By June 1986 that exercise would have been completed and, according to present indications, France will be making preparations for a reciprocal gesture.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

"France is Anxious to Strengthen its Relations With India"

Jean Bernard Merimee, French ambassador to India, told Sankarshan Thakur

Q: At what stage do you think are Indo French relations today?

A Our relations I think, are in a very happy state and what is more important, they are developing steadily. We very much hope that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to France will give this relationship a new impetus.

Q: In what way?

A I would say for various reasons. We are looking forward very much to this visit by your Prime Minister. First of all for political reasons. I mean we know the importance of India in the international community, we know the role you play in the Non Aligned Movement, we know the part, the Indian part, in the strategic balance of India. India is a great country, a very fast growing country. That is why we are anxious to strengthen our relationship with this country. And we are very happy and honoured that the Prime Minister has chosen France for one of his first visits abroad, which is a very good thing. Your Prime Minister, the French President and our Prime Minister, Mr Fabius, should be acquainted personally. I mean they have met before but that was for very short periods. You know how important it is to establish personal relationships. Well, so much for the political reasons. There are cultural reasons as well. You know that this is the year of India in France and it will be very important because it will stretch over a whole year and every aspect of Indian culture—performing arts, visual arts, the modern aspects of Indian civilisation will be displayed in various parts of France so that every Frenchman gets a chance to have a good idea of everything about India. I think this is the first ever enterprise of its kind on such a magnitude in France, in my knowledge the first time any country has organised such an event in France. We have a long history of cultural relationship. You remember that before and after the war (the second world war) your leaders had intellectual relationships with our leaders and writers, like the one between Andre Malraux and Pandit Nehru. But that was only between a few people, now it is getting down to the level of masses.

Q: France and India are uniquely placed in the sense that France while it belongs to the Western bloc, does differ with the USA on several issues, the most recent being Star Wars and it has also developed an indigenous defence industry, specially the aircraft industry. We have benefited from this cooperation in the form of the Mirage 2000 aircraft but the deal has not gone through fully. Do you think this visit will open up this



We have a long history of cultural relationship. Before and after the second world war your (India's) leaders had intellectual relationships with our leaders and writers, like the one between Pandit Nehru and Andre Malraux. But that was only between a few people, now it is getting down to the level of the masses.

matter? And, what about cooperation in defence aeronautics as a whole?

A Well, let's hope so. As you know India bought 40 Mirage 2000 aircraft and is presently considering the option of buying more. We have also put forward a proposal for building in India the Mirage 2000. On our part we are perfectly ready to transfer technology and help India in setting up a factory for the Mirage 2000 in India.

Q: India is looking forward to France for so many things. What do the French look forward to from India?

A A lot of things. You know that the trade between the two countries is not insignificant. You in India are very good in the software field. That is a field from which we could benefit most certainly.

Q: But in terms of international politics?

A Well, there we have the same objectives. For example, as far as the North South dialogue is concerned, we certainly take the view that it is normally not proper and that it is economically unrealistic that a tenth of the world will develop and the rest of the population will lag behind. We don't think this is a healthy state for the world economy. When we come to multilateral trade negotiations, I think we have the same view too. Why go on and have rounds of negotiations if the decisions taken at the last one are not implemented? What is the point if the developing countries don't have their say? Why lower the trade barriers when at the same time a currency like the US dollar is fluctuating so much? That disrupts the whole economic situation. So we take the view that parallel to the commercial negotiations, there should be a reform of the international monetary system. That is why we took this position even in the Bonn summit recently. And on top of that we, I mean India and France, think that the ultimate objective is promoting peace and disarmament which is absolutely essential.

Q: Generally speaking, this visit of the Prime Minister is going to strengthen relationship and give it a new impetus. What specifically are the French looking forward to when Rajiv Gandhi arrives in Paris?

A It is always very thrilling and exciting to have a new Prime Minister visit us. And we are very interested, personally I would say, in having his opinion on a wide range of subjects, not only on Indo French relations but the world at large. We will sign an agreement in order to set up in New Delhi an Indo French centre for promotion of advanced research. But the real purpose of this visit is to let the leaders of the two countries know each other.

A Taste of India

The Festival of India in the USA will evoke a stirring of interest in things Indian, reports Sharon Butler from Washington

To the west in the 19th century, Indian art was no art at all. Even as Europeans, notably the British were unearthing Indian archeological treasures, they still remained preoccupied with the classic line of Greek forms. To them Indian art was a "fermenting fantasy" worthy of comment only when it showed traces of Hellenic culture. The influential critic of the time, John Ruskin, once denounced it as "the archtype of bad art of all the earth" according to Pramod Chandra, professor of South Asian Art at Harvard University. It took the discriminating eye of Rodin to make westerners appreciate Indian art. And it may just take the Festival of India to make Americans see in the country more than empty bellies and Om humming gurus.

The Festival of India opened last month in Washington, and it could not have opened at a better time. Summer is tourist season, and millions of Americans from all over the country will flock to the nation's capital. More than an estimated four million for each month of June, July and August will make their way to the famous Smithsonian Institution, that collection of art, history, and science which flanks the central mall in the city. And the Smithsonian this summer will be saturated with India.

Already on exhibit in the modern wing of the Smithsonian's National Gallery of Art is "The sculpture of India 3000 BC 1300 AD." Some 100 pieces in stone, bronze and ivory, from the Harappan culture to the last period when Indian sculpture remained free of outside influences, are lovingly displayed in two larger halls which are decorated with plants and wall sized photographs. Back in India, as one Indian art historian commented, the work might have stood by an open window with bars on it, but in Washington they are attractively illuminated with overhead lighting that draws attention to the rich contours and textures of the sculpture.

Soon to open at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History on 4 June is *Aditi*, created for the International Year of the Child in 1979 and the most popular exhibits of the London Festival of India. The museum's spe-

cial exhibits gallery will be redesigned, with simulated mud walls and other features to give an appearance of a rural setting in India. Visitors will wander through 18 sections, each with artefacts and live performances to represent a particular stage in an Indian's life: fertility, courtship, marriage, pregnancy, birth, infancy, childhood, initiation, learning and maturity. The marriage

section, for example, will be decorated as a nuptial chamber, with wedding costumes on display and with songs and dances of a live wedding procession. The childhood section will hold a variety of toys, and a toymaker will be demonstrating his craft. The section on initiation and learning will combine models of villages, forts and temples, occupational toys, sculptures and paintings.



The John F Kennedy Center for Performing Arts: one of the major sites for the Festival

COVER STORY

with performances and demonstrations by puppeteers, story-scroll painters and balladeers. In addition in the end of June and beginning of July, the recreation of an Indian *mela* will be the highlight of the Smithsonian's annual festival of American folk life. The five-acre central mall is supposed to come alive with the sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and texture of India. There will be street performers: acrobats, animal and human impersonators, musicians, fortune tellers, folk dancers, artisans and hawkers selling everything from pillow coverings to *dosa*.

Perhaps, the most creative exhibit is *The Golden Eye*, which will open in November at the Cooper-Hewett Museum, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Design in New York. The museum has invited a number of world-famous designers and architects to participate in a unique, some say, historic experiment. They will travel to India to meet and collaborate with Indian artisans to discover the traditional crafts of the country and then incorporate them into new modern designs and creations.

These are only some of the major museum exhibits, but a host of other exhibits and cultural events are planned and they will not be just in Washington and New York. After openings in those two cities and a gala concert at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi will formally inaugurate the Festival, there will be events all over the country for the next 18 months. The Indian government is hosting an exhibit titled, "Science and Technology The Indian Tradition," which will premiere at the Museum of Science and Industry, a delightful children's museum in Chicago with push-button displays similar to the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum in Calcutta. The exhibits will then travel to science museums in Los Angeles, California, Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington, Richmond, and Virginia.

Many smaller museums are dusting off their permanent collections and finding treasures from India. The Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts, for example, is dusting off old portraits, arte-facts and goods given to the museum by Yankees who traded with Indian merchants in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The exhibit titled, "Yankee Traders and Indian Merchants, 1790-1860," is supposed to present the initiation of relations between the US and India after the American war

of independence.

The Phillips collection, just around the corner from the Indian embassy in Washington, is pulling out 40 works by Indian contemporary artists from its Chester and Davida Herwitz family collection, and the exhibit will later tour other art museums. There will be a number of photographic exhibits with works by Raghubir Singh and Rosalind Solomon. There will be a film series at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the University of California at Los Angeles, with films by Raj Kapoor and Ritwik Ghatak, as well as contemporary films. There will be performing arts for children, including a production of the play, *The Little Clay Cart*, directed by Balwant Gargi at the Goodwin Theatre at Trinity College in Connecticut.



Lovers: one of the works which will be on display during the Festival

There will be modern music—a production of Philip Glass's *Satyagraha* at the New York City Opera, for example, and a *Salute to India* programme at the New York Philharmonic, put together by conductor Zubin Mehta. There will be Indian classical music, mostly at university halls, with performances by V.G. Jog, Lal-gudi Jairaman, Shiv Kumar Sharma and Zakir Hussein, among others.

Organising the festival has been a mammoth undertaking. Fine arts, performing arts and education committees were formed and their

names enlisted—from senator Daniel Moynihan and former ambassador Robert Goheen to actor Dustin Hoffman and composer John Cage. But their function was mainly to lend prestige to the festival. The daily footwork and coordination of activities fell on the shoulders of Niranjana Desai, minister of culture in the Indian embassy, brought over especially to manage the festival because of his experience in overseeing the London festival, and Ted Tanen, executive director of the Indo-US sub-commission on education and culture. Also, much of the work was delegated to the participants themselves. The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, hired Diana Vreeland as curator to put together its own show of Indian court costumes. The Smithsonian hired Pramod Chandra, professor of South Asian Art at Harvard University.

Publicity for particular events too, is the responsibility of the participants. Fortunately, the Indian embassy is not handling it. The disorganised press office at the embassy attempted to organise a luncheon for the press invited for a preview of the sculpture exhibit at the National Gallery of Art. It thought that it had arranged a place at the Marriott Hotel just behind the Smithsonian—an easy walk away from the gallery—but found that it had mistakenly reserved a place instead at a Marriott Hotel on the other side of town. In any case, the competence of the publicity is apt to vary according to the competence of the participants' own public relations offices. The Smithsonian has a large and active public relations staff that has already been able to draw wide spread media attention to its own events. It holds previews of exhibits for the press, and has sent out extensive press releases in glossy folders. The *Washington Post*, at least partially as a result of all the publicity, has carried no less than three reviews of the sculpture exhibit.

The University of Maryland is less competent. It is hosting a ten-day music festival of concerts, lectures and workshops, the largest of four to be held as part of the Festival of India this fall, but at least in the past, it has not given adequate attention to publicising events. A brilliant performance there in 1984 by violinist V.G. Jog was attended by only a handful of Indians because of a lack of publicity. Yet the Sangeet Research Academy in Calcutta, which is organising the first phase of the classical music programme for the festival, is making up for the University of Maryland's lapses. A diligent public relations manager has

The Festival's Dancing Bear

Munna will shortly be flying from Jaipur to Paris to take part in the Festival of India in France. The eight-year-old Himalayan dancing bear—for that is what Munna is—will be the star attraction at the two-day Indian *mela* at the festival.

The Paris adventure of Munna has been carefully planned by the sponsors of his trip, the Indian Hotels Company. Munna was selected by them from among hundreds of other dancing bears, because of his popularity with foreign tourists at the Rambagh Palace Hotel in Jaipur. Ever since his selection, Munna has been leading a very special life. He was made to undergo a rigorous training schedule, put on a special diet of bread, *dalia*, milk and fruits, shampooed everyday and even provided with a brand new wardrobe. He has already acquired proficiency in dancing the Cha-cha-cha.

Munna is, perhaps, the first Indian bear to have been given a special permit and visa by the French embassy. The visa officials who pre-



Munna

pared his papers were surprised to see his passport number: Bear 0001. The reason for Munna's visit: "Required to dance for the French

people eating street food from India at the Trocadero Palace and on Quai Debilly during the Festival of India in Paris, summer of 1985."

The bear has been granted a daily allowance of 100 dollars a day by the Reserve Bank of India. He has been allotted hotel accommodation in Paris as a "member of the sales promotion staff" of the hotel. Munna's papers state that his "hotel room, laundry bills and meals" will be paid by the company but he will have to pay for his liquor and cigarettes.

Before the show in Paris, Munna will be lodged at a free habitat park near Paris where he will rehearse daily with his trainer Mohammed Munshi. On 7 June, Munna will put on his Jaipur *topee* and new jacket to take part in the Indian food festival. On display at the food festival will be the great variety of *chats* of northern India to the *dosas* and *idlis* of the south. But other than mouth-watering fare served, the main attraction will be the 38-inch dancing Indian bear.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

been drumming up interest in the press here. In fact, while media coverage for the London Festival was lacking, it has been extensive in the USA, spurred in part by the wave of films and news about India. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* have both carried more than one article about the festival. *Vanity Fair* interviewed the wife of the ambassador about the festival. The *National Geographic* has come out with a wonderful photographic spread. *All Things Considered*, the best radio programme in the country, carried an interview with Pupul Jayakar and a spot on the opening at the National Gallery of Art.

Preparations for the opening of the festival have all gone smoothly, of course. Back in India, there was the controversy over sending antiquities out of the country. Here, the resident Indian community was more reluctant to help than the community in Britain had been, expecting something in return for any contributions. And then there were those obstacles that no one could ever have anticipated. For example, the very day that Mr Desai and Mr Tanen boarded a plane for Minneapolis, Minnesota, where they were to finalise a programme at the nationally-famous Chil-

dren's Theatre Company and School, they read in the newspapers that the director of the company had just been arrested for child molesting.

With 1,500 art objects coming from India, 300 performing artists and a budget estimated at dollar 12 million—Rs five crores spent by the Indian government, the rest mostly by US private companies and organisations—the Festival of India is the largest cultural festival ever held in the United States. But with all the fanfare attending its opening, perhaps expectations are running too high. Certainly, India will dominate the cultural scene in Washington and New York this summer, but such level of activity is impossible to sustain for one-and-a-half years. And it is bound to be diluted as the festival moves to the smaller, quieter towns and cities across the US.

It is also unreasonable to expect great shifts in Indo-US relations from such cultural exchanges, even one on such a grand scale as this. Who can imagine that the secretary of state would change his mind about arming Pakistan because he had been inspired by the Yakshi from Didarganj? Sceptics also doubt that the Festival can do anything so vague as "forge better bridges of understand-

ing between the peoples of the world's two largest democracies," as Festival brochures suggest. But it is reasonable to expect some fallout from the Festival, at least some stirring of interest in things Indian. And for India, that can mean profitable increases in tourism and, more importantly, trade. Both the Smithsonian and the Metropolitan Museum of Art are planning sales of Indian items—from place mats to jewellery and musical instruments—to accompany their exhibits. Bloomingdale's, the posh New York department store, often organises its new merchandise and sales around a country theme, and this summer it has chosen India to coincide with the Festival. It has reportedly placed orders for merchandise totalling three million dollars. Remembering that New York sets American trends, the Bloomingdale's selection together with the Cooper-Hewitt Museum's *Golden Eye* exhibit could be significant. Many observers of the design scene believe that America is ready now for a change. It has long been preoccupied with the plain, sleek, functional lines from modern Europe. It may just be ready now for a new era of the colourful, ornate, rich textures of India.



When Gandhi was asked 'What was Motilal Nehru's greatest quality?' he said, 'Love of his son.' 'Was it not love of India?' the Mahatma was asked. 'No,' he replied. Motilal's love for India was

derived from his love of Jawaharlal. This was a highly perceptive judgment which has been confirmed by a study of the Nehru family papers. Parental love is a common emotion, and we all know the depth of feeling which centres on an only son in a Hindu family. But there was something unique about the quality of Motilal's affection for his son. On 19 October 1905, a few hours before sailing from Marseilles, Motilal wrote to 16-year-old Jawahar, whom he had left in Harrow School. 'You must bear in mind that in you we are leaving the dearest treasure we have in this world and perhaps in other worlds to come. I think I can without vanity say that I am the founder of the fortunes of the Nehru family. I look upon you, my dear son, as the man who will build upon the foundations I have laid and have the satis-

faction of seeing a whole structure of renown rearing up its head to the skies.'

During the seven years Jawaharlal spent in Harrow and Cambridge one of the recurring themes in his correspondence with his father was the course of Indian politics. Motilal had attended some of the early Congress sessions but his incursions into the political field had been sporadic and brief. As he forged his way to the forefront of the Allahabad bar he had hardly the time or the inclination for distractions from his professional preoccupations. In 1907 he wrote to his son that he had received an invitation to preside over a political conference at Allahabad. Jawaharlal urged him to accept it. 'I am sure you will be successful in the new line as you have been in other fields. You have already kept away from it far too long. Motilal followed the advice of his son, whose influence was perceptible in the next decade not only in the deeper involvement of the elder Nehru in the UP Congress and Legislature but in a steady leftward movement in his political orientation. In 1917 both father and son joined the Home Rule Movement after the internment of

Four Generations From Motilal to Rajiv

By B. I.

Annie Besant a year later as the Congress split over the attitude to the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. Motilal, to the great satisfaction of his son, found himself in the extremist camp led by Tilak. In 1920 Motilal decided to cast in his lot with Gandhi. It is doubtful if at the age of 60 he would have made a clean break with his past and plunged into the unknown were it not for the unshakable resolve of his son to go the way of *satyagraha*.



Indira Gandhi with Jawaharlal Nehru at the Bhubaneswar AICC session in 1964



From the family album: Motilal Nehru (sitting, centre) and Gandhi (standing, second from right)

Generations: Motilal Nehru Gandhi

Nanda

Like C. R. Das, Motilal became a legendary figure in the nationalist lore as a man who had sloughed off the luxury of a lifetime to follow the Mahatma, some of whose charisma rubbed off on him and indeed on the entire Nehru family. But it was not by charisma alone that Motilal attained or kept his position at the apex of nationalist politics for ten years. He brought to the work of the Indian National Congress the same unremitting industry which had

made him one of the most successful lawyers of his time. He served as general secretary of the Congress in 1921, the most crucial year in the history of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Along with C. R. Das, he founded the Swaraj Party, running its one-man secretariat from Anand Bhawan in Allahabad.

With the quickness of his intellect, his skill in debate, his adroitness as a tactician and his strength of purpose, Motilal made an outstanding leader of the opposition in the Central Legislative Assembly. M. R. Jayakar, who knew him both as a colleague and as an opponent, gives us some revealing glimpses of the elder Nehru. Whenever Motilal spoke in the Assembly, it was distilled sense and reason. Even when he let out pyrotechnics, they rose from *terra firma* and came back to *terra firma*.

Jayakar recalls the superb dignity and self-confidence of Motilal who rose from the damtiest meal with the quiet self-possession of a person accustomed to enjoy the choicest gifts of life, as if they were merely his due. Curiously enough, some of the European members of the Assembly, even members of the Viceroy's Council, could not resist a sneaking

admiration for Motilal. What was it that drew him to the guardians of the empire which he was openly trying to subvert? Jayakar suggests that 'some secret affinity appeared to exist between them, born perhaps of the power to rule and govern men'.

Unlike his father, Jawaharlal had felt the call of politics when he was very young. Before he was 40, he had been catapulted into the higher echelons of nationalist politics as the elder Nehru's son and Gandhi's favourite disciple. But Jawaharlal did not subsist on the reflected charisma of the Mahatma. As general secretary of the UP Congress and then of the All India Congress Committee, he toiled incessantly, writing, speaking. Between the spells in prison, he divided his time between public meetings and railway trains. He became the ablest exponent of the finest ideals of India's freedom struggle: national unity, secularism, democracy, socialism. They were not exclusively his ideals; they were shared by successive generations of Indian nationalists, but no one did more than Jawaharlal to imprint them on the Indian psyche. His reiteration of these ideals, day in



Jawaharlal Nehru (standing, extreme left) and Indira



Rajiv Gandhi in conversation with Indira Gandhi at the AICC(I) plenary session in Calcutta



From the files Jawaharlal Nehru (sitting, second from left) prepares to defend the INA prisoners at the historic trial at the Red Fort in 1945

day out, seemed superfluous to some of his contemporaries, but later events have shown that national unity like freedom and love, cannot be taken for granted. Jawaharlal did not preach these ideals in the abstract. As one of the architects of independent India's Constitution and as the first Prime Minister he sought to give them institutional expression.

By the time Jawaharlal came to head the government of India, he had acquired a charisma of his own. But he did not rest on his laurels. To the last day of his life, he did not spare himself, maintaining a schedule of 17 hours a day. H. V. R. Iyengar, who as principal private secretary had watched him at work, confessed that he was unable to find 'a purely physical or physiological explanation for the amount of work that Nehru was able to put in day after day,' and that it was really a case of the utter triumph of the spirit over the body, of consuming passion for public work, overcoming the normal mechanism of the human frame. For 17 years Jawaharlal took on himself political and administrative burdens which would have broken a lesser man in a few months.

It is hardly necessary at this time to recall the circumstances which brought Indira Gandhi to the leadership of the Congress party and prime ministership after Lal Bahadur Shastri's death. It seemed at first that her main asset was the reflected charisma of her father. The elderly gentlemen, the provincial Congress bosses, who had seated her on the

throne in the hope of wielding real power themselves soon discovered that she was no greenhorn in the game of politics. She completely outplayed them. She had never been in the government, but she learnt fast. What was more, despite her record of ill health in earlier years, she revealed amazing reserves of energy as she ran the machinery of the government, managed the party and coped with the kaleidoscopic changes on the international scene. Indeed, in the capacity for hard work, her record almost approached that of her father. She possessed, or at least acquired, a poise and aplomb which enabled her to hold her own on the international stage. Her position in her party and government and indeed in the country was surer than she believed it to be. In domestic politics she lacked the innate confidence of her father, if he trusted his colleagues and subordinates too much, she trusted too little. This inner insecurity led her sometimes to change the rules of the political game, evoking bitter controversies and animosities, which made her opponents as well as adherents see politics only in personal terms for her or against her.

Rajiv Gandhi's political style during these first months seems to resemble more that of his grandfather than that of his mother. His accession to supreme power has come at an age at which Jawaharlal first achieved national status as Congress president in 1929. Jawaharlal's political apprenticeship lasted for 30 years,

that of Rajiv Gandhi 30 months. Like his mother, he started with the inestimable advantage of the Nehru charisma, the people tend to take for granted his commitment to national unity, democracy and secularism and freedom from regional and sectarian prejudices. He will need more than his inherited charisma in the coming months and years if the country is to move forward. It is tempting but dangerous to see the dilemmas of Rajiv Gandhi in personal terms, and to expect him to solve all the problems that beset this country. India is too large, diverse and difficult to be governed effectively through the processes of representative democracy even by the ablest and the most conscientious of rulers unless he is supported by a minimum dedication at all levels. He can give a sense of direction, but progress will be slow if it is not stalled altogether, if national energies are continuously distracted by *morchas* and *bandhs*, if government is not 'responsive' and the opposition is not 'responsible,' if ministers tend to become courtiers, if chief ministers live from one byelection to another, if legislators of ruling parties imagine themselves to be members of a cooperative vested interest society in which they hold preference shares, if senior civil servants have their gaze riveted on the next promotion or a post retirement assignment, above all if the proliferating middle and bottom level bureaucracy in the administrative hierarchy lacks incentives for good work and disincentives for bad work.

'Jawaharlal Nehru Looked at Things Scientifically'

Dr Homi Sethna told Lekha Dhari

Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a free India had a scientific base. And towards fulfilling that vision he guided his team of dedicated scientists. They built something out of nothing while laying the foundation for future scientists to build on. His was the vision, theirs the genius and the hard work.

One of the men who contributed towards fulfilling Pandit Nehru's vision, Dr Homi Sethna describes those difficult times under a scientifically enlightened leadership. Of Dr Sethna's 35 years in government service, the last 12 were spent as principal secretary to the government of India and chairman of the department of atomic energy.

Q What would you say was Pandit Nehru's role in bringing about a scientific revolution in this country and putting it firmly on the technological map of the world?

A Nehru was a planner. He set the scientific foundations. People may argue about the implementation, but certainly not the foundation. What was industry before independence? Textiles, coal, nothing much. In nearly 40 years, we have an industrial environment—naturally science based. It requires a few generations to produce a breed of people to achieve and acclimatise themselves to what we have. In that I think the man's vision was something to be admired. He had courage and looked at things scientifically—the way we should. He was not a politician—he was a leader. Without him where would we be? His was the base—and he set the pace.

Q What was his first major step towards scientific development?

A He set up the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). This required both thought

and vision. Atomic energy which was a part of National Resources and Scientific Research (NRSR) became a separate department, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) in 1953. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) were also his idea. He laid the foundation stone of IIT, Powai. The basic approach was that without trained manpower you are nowhere. You might say that most of the trained boys quit the country after learning the ropes, but that is because of the present Americanised emphasis on management here, relegating the tools of production and thereby depriving them of the best opportunities.

Q Did he believe in basic research or merely acquiring technology and catching up with the west?

A He believed in basic research and as much self reliance as possible. I remember when we wanted to



(From left to right) Dr Homi Bhabha, Escott Reid, Jawaharlal Nehru and V K Krishna Menon at the signing of the Canada-India Atomic Reactor Project in 1956

put up the uranium mine and mill near Jamshedpur in Bihar, an Indian company was given preference to a foreign one. When the Rare Earths Plant was set up at Alwaye in Kerala in 1951, he left everything and came down specifically for the inauguration. He spent a whole day with us, despite a busy schedule.

Q: Did he directly influence any projects taken up by you?

A: Yes, under him we did a lot of things. He trusted people and once he developed a trust in you, he gave you a free hand. A very, very free hand. I, perhaps, wouldn't do the things I did then now, if it were not for him. The greatest impetus for conversion of research into technology was started in the late Fifties (this is with special reference to atomic energy). And, of course, we had the added advantage that nobody was willing to help us. But Nehru had confidence in us and this pushed us forward, made us do things. So, of course, his influence told on the projects that I took up. For instance, the uranium mine and mill at Bihar, nuclear grade uranium metal, setting up of the first reactor—Apsara and the second, Cyrus. It was a time of great progress.

Q: Who were the pioneering scientists and what was his relationship with them?

A: With Dr. Homi Bhabha were Dr. Brahm Prakash, Dr. Tendulkar, Dr. Rao, Dr. Raja Ramanna, Professor K.C. Chandrasekhar (he is now professor of mathematics at Zurich), Professor Menon, Dr. Athawale and Dr. Megnad Saha, and so on. I joined in 1949. We had at that time a scientific advisory committee to the cabinet, into which I was inducted later. He used to meet us occasionally for discussions. He used to know everyone of us by our first names, and that's something—considering nobody knows anybody today. I remember we had a conference on atomic energy in Delhi in 1953, where he spent the day with us discussing and arguing. In fact, he pulled up people if they did not participate with the right outlook—that is, if they became personal instead of viewing a topic of discussion with scientific objectivity.

His confidence in us also gave tremendous impetus to the electronics industry, bringing it where it is today. Dr Homi Bhabha had suggested that there should be greater emphasis on electronics, which Nehru accepted and a separate committee was set up to look after it. In this manner he helped and

also influenced us in a number of ways.

Q: Would you call him a progressive leader?

A: Extremely progressive. He was not afraid of taking decisions which he had to, even if they were not palatable.

Q: What was his attitude towards heavy engineering?

A: What it should have been—that heavy engineering is the backbone of any country which wants to industrialise. The single biggest obstacle, however, has been that we have had to compress the training and outlook of people. An outlook on life has been compressed into 40 years. If the common opinion is that Indians cannot keep and use equipment properly; it may not be unfounded. But there is a reason. How do you expect a person from a village to handle sophisticated equipment like his counterpart in America or Germany, who has grown up using it?

Jawaharlal Nehru was a planner. He set the scientific foundations. People may argue about the implementation, but certainly not the foundation. What was industry before independence? In nearly 40 years, we have an industrial environment

Q: In what fields of scientific development was he particularly interested?

A: He was fascinated by science. There is no particular field that he singled out. He was interested in natural phenomena. And science is an expression of natural phenomena.

Q: India today is a leading country in the field of space technology. How much was Nehru's contribution to this?

A: Space actually came into the picture in 1961-'62. At least that is when we thought of it. The first positive step came in making rockets, with the help of France. There again the department was part of NRSR, till it became too big to remain a part of it.

Q: What was his attitude towards nuclear technology?

A: Definitely nothing to do with its warlike applications. There are two concepts: either it can be used to arm us to the teeth or to build power stations. It can be used as a source of energy or a source of destruction. He believed, naturally, in the latter two. The trouble with all these mass destructive weapons is that they can be triggered off by accident. So you see, on both sides there are compensations. To have and not to have.

Q: Did he have any interest in the scientific development of weapon systems? Or, was his interest only in keeping with his ideas of self-reliance?

A: He is the person who brought in the scientific adviser to the ministry of defence, Professor Blackett. The Terminal Ballistic Research Laboratory, Explosives Research and Development Laboratory and so on wouldn't have come about without him—or at least not with such speed. Even though he talked about peace, it was with a stick.

Q: Did he encourage collaborations in scientific research with other countries?

A: Up to a point. Of course, on the basis that it was a symbiotic relationship.

Q: What was his monetary contribution to scientific research? Was he lavish with funds?

A: He was strict. We didn't get as much as people imagined. He controlled excess expenditure, but then those were difficult times. It was the spirit of adventure that kept us going at a time when salaries were miserable—and difficult.

Q: From Pandit Nehru to Indira Gandhi to Rajiv Gandhi, has there been any tangible increase in interest in scientific research and development?

A: Mrs Gandhi shared her father's interest in science. And like him her interests were varied. Nehru was always more relaxed. But then you have got to take into account the prevailing conditions—Mrs Gandhi lived through troubled times, shouldering a great many problems which her father did not have. As for Rajiv Gandhi, I cannot say, as I retired in 1983 and never had the chance to work under his leadership.

Q: Looking back, do you think we have achieved everything Pandit Nehru visualised?

A: That is difficult to say. He like any other Indian would say we could have achieved more. But there lies the point. Progress is through dissatisfaction.

Nagaland

A State of Corruption

Inefficiency, sloth and shady deals characterise the Congress(I) government led by S.C Jamir

Q Name the device which provides an alternate source of light the intensity of which can be increased or decreased, is attached to an oil tanker' and was sold to the Nagaland government for Rs 2 000 apiece

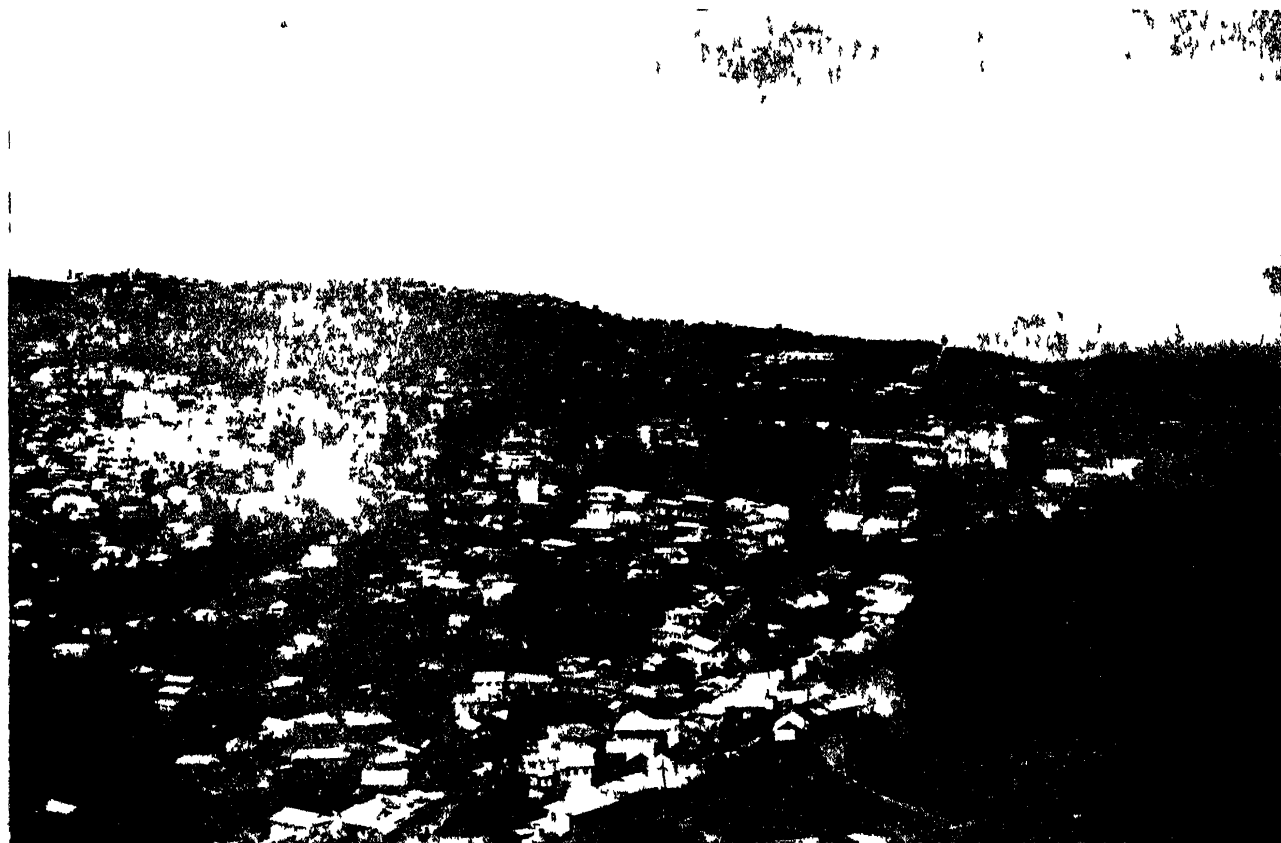
A An ordinary oil lantern

If this sounds absurd it probably is. And there are few people in Kohima who would vouch for its authenticity. But there are many who would narrate this story with a lot of relish, simply to stress the nature of the government in Nagaland today: inefficient, slothful and corrupt. And if this isn't enough to describe the Congress(I) government

headed by S.C. Jamir, there is an abundance of epithets to do so: the most popular of which is 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' (there are 41 Congress(I) legislators in the Nagaland Assembly). But just in case anyone thinks these are empty words, let us walk down the corridors of the secretariat in Kohima. First stop: the public works department.

A saying is becoming popular in Nagaland these days: 'The work is done in the sky and the payments are made on earth.' And those who have coined this obviously had the functioning of the PWD in mind. For, in this department, payments are not necessarily commensurate with the work done. Nor for that matter, is it

necessary to get a particular job done in order to get paid for it. And it is not as amazing as it may seem: for the process is quite simple, it keeps both the contractor and the government happy. The only ones to suffer are the hapless public for whom the job is supposed to have been done. In connivance with the staff of the concerned department, bills are submitted for imaginary projects and money withdrawn from the treasury as payment. And one of the most common projects for which such fictitious bills are submitted is 'clearing a landslide.' Unlike other projects, in the case of clearing a landslide there need not be any proof of the work left behind. So, even if a landslide



A bird's eye view of Kohima

INVESTIGATION

has not taken place, if a particular government official in charge of a certain area of the state is happy with the 'cut' that he gets, it is shown in the books that a landslide did occur and was cleared by a contractor and the payment made. But this is not all. Sometimes the "contractor" can even be a little boy. Take the case of Jacob, the six year old son of V. Lahsu of the Congress(I) (he was also a party candidate in the 1982 Assembly elections in the state) who was paid according to Tongpang Ao the chief engineer, PWD, government of Nagaland, Rs 19,364 for "clearing a landslide" on the Chizama Road near Pfitzero in December 1982.

From the public works department to the public health engineering department is not a very long distance. Nor is their style of functioning very dissimilar. Examine, for instance, the 'case of the GI pipes'. According to the Sixth Plan the government of Nagaland had acquired huge stocks of galvanised iron (GI) pipes which cost the state treasury about Rs three crores, for water supply projects in the rural areas. However, it was suddenly discovered by the middle of 1984 that the pipes were far in excess of the amount needed and the government decided to dispose of the pipes to bring some more money into the exchequer. So, about 17,000 metres of GI pipes meant for the

Ghaspari water supply scheme, 8,000 metres of GI pipes meant for the Lotha middle range water supply scheme and 4,000 metres of GI pipes meant for the Yongia range water supply scheme were disposed of — at rates which were 40 per cent below their original price. Mr Vamuzo of the NNDP, who is the leader of the opposition in the Assembly, has made a very pertinent observation: "What was the need to sell metal pipes which are non-perishable items? I can fully understand that it may be necessary to sell perishable items which are not required, but why pipes whose price will in any case rise and not fall and which are bound to be required sooner or later?"

This is where the second part of the GI pipes case begins. These pipes were required sooner rather than later. In January this year orders were placed again for the same galvanised pipes which had been sold just six months back—in the three to four inch category—for use in the Dimapur water works. The orders were placed by the Kohima division of the PHF for an amount which is at least 25 per cent of the stocks sold last year for about Rs 25 lakhs. However, there is one major difference in buying back the pipes now: prices have in the meantime shot up and the government will have to pay a higher price than that at which the pipes had been sold.

This leads to a host of questions. To begin with, why had GI pipes been bought far in excess of the demand for it? Was it not the fault of the government that it had planned wrongly? Again, was it not carelessness on the part of the government to have sold off the GI pipes without realising that they would be required a couple of months later and the government would have to buy them back at a higher price? Or, is what the opposition alleging, and which seems well within the realms of possibility, true, that the pipes were first sold at a cheap price and then bought back again at a higher rate simply to allow some government functionaries to get some money out of kickbacks, which is not too uncommon a practice in Nagaland?

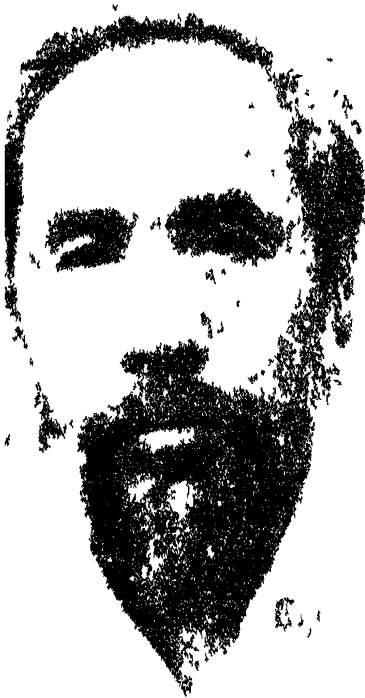
If the government of Nagaland is today making a quick buck on projects meant for the urban areas, let us see what it is doing in the rural areas, away from the public eye. Naga ministers pride themselves on the schemes the government has introduced in the villages, in addition to those laid down by the ministry of rural development of the central gov-



Chief minister S. C. Jamir

ernment, like the integrated rural development programme (IRDP) and the national rural employment programme (NREP). Along with these, the Nagaland government has village development boards (VDB) for community development. The decision to set up VDBs according to a circular issued by the government of Nagaland, "was taken by the state government not only to bring the governmental process to the doorsteps of the villagers, but also to lead to planning at the grassroot's level with governmental support." The idea is to enable the villagers, through the VDBs controlled by them, to formulate their own schemes and programmes and fix the priority of the work to be done in the villages according to the availability of funds. VDBs are funded either through a grant in aid from the government or through matching cash grants—for every rupee collected by the villagers, the government will contribute the same amount for the development of the village. Under this programme, money was paid directly from the state exchequer to the accounts of the VDBs and it was left to the respective VDBs to decide how to utilise the funds.

However, in 1984, the government decided to stop cash grants to the VDBs and instead decided to give the villagers material. According to Ru-



1 Ngullie

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ral Development Programmes, Grant-in-aid and Materials, a booklet brought out by the Nagaland government, "Although it is good to feel that the villagers know their requirements best, and that they are capable of formulating their own development schemes, that they could actually undertake these activities, it would be too early for us to expect the rural people to achieve the targets without necessary government support and active participation at this stage. The experiences and assessments made show that due to difficulties in making arrangements for procurement of material components a number of VDBs failed to implement many schemes over the years, resulting in misuse of funds provided." So, the government stepped in to "help" the villagers procure the goods—and along with it came corruption, as deals were struck between contractors and the government. Commissions changed hands and villagers were dumped with



Kivezhe Sema unaware?

goods which they did not require. For instance asbestos sheets procured for the VDBs can still be seen lying dumped at various points along the

route from Kohima to Pftuzero, as there is no one to collect them, simply because they are not needed. Not only this, some of the goods procured by the government have been bought at exorbitant rates from the contractors and given to the villagers. For example, crowbars which cost Rs 56 per piece in the market were bought by the government for about Rs 137 per piece, pickaxes which cost Rs 18 each in the market were bought by the government for Rs 90 each and asbestos sheets being sold in the market for Rs 54 per metre, were procured by the government for about Rs 184 per metre. Fortunately the system of the government procuring the material for the villagers has recently been discontinued. But according to the then rural development minister, K L Chishi, "It is true that sometimes some of the goods procured cost a bit more than the market price, but the villagers did not have to pay for it. It was given to them

The Curious Reshuffle

"Chief minister Mr S C Jamir has said that the Nagaland ministry has been reshuffled to see that the ministers are not overburdened with too many portfolios. *Naganews*, a state government publication, had said while reporting a press conference of the chief minister on the eve of a cabinet reshuffle. But despite the assurances by the chief minister when the reshuffle did take place a day later, the scenario was quite different from the one promised by Mr Jamir. Instead of 'lessening the burden of the ministers by giving them fewer portfolios to handle' (as the chief minister had told this correspondent, while commenting on his cabinet reshuffle in the course of an interview) some ministers were in fact more burdened with the weight of a few more ministries to handle. **Check**
List of cabinet ministers before 4.4.85

T A Ngullie Finance, revenue power
K L Chishi Education, rural development
C Chongshen Public health engineering
Kariba Food and civil supplies
I K Sema Agriculture
P Enyei Konyak Works and housing
Tiameren Industries and commerce

Kivezhe Sema Social security and welfare, art and culture
N I Jamir Planning
Vizadel Sakhrie Medical
Rothrong Sangtam Transport and geology and mining
Ministers of state

I N Ngullie Animal husbandry and veterinary services
Shikiho Sema Law, justice and parliamentary affairs
Kihoto Hollohon Excise
Anwar Hussain Transport
H L Singson Forests
Nokzenketba Soil conservation
Puse Zhotso Information, publicity and tourism
Bangjak Phom Public health engineering
I Marchiba Works and housing, fisheries

Nocklem Konyak Education, printing and stationary
List of cabinet ministers as on 25.4.85

T A Ngullie Finance and taxation, land revenue power
K L Chishi Education, physical education, sports, youth welfare, department of justice and law, parliamentary affairs
C Chongshen Public health engineering, local self government
Kariba Forest, social forestry, wild life preservation and environmental conservation
I K Sema Agriculture and horticulture

P Enyei Konyak Works and housing
Tiameren Industries and commerce

Kivezhe Sema Social security and welfare, art and culture
N I Jamir Planning, urban development, economics and statistics, geology and mining
Vizadel Sakhrie Public health and family welfare
Rothrong Sangtam Transport and communication
Ministers of state

I N Ngullie Animal husbandry and veterinary services, labour and employment
Shikiho Sema Rural development
Kihoto Hollohon Excise minister of state attached to the chief minister
Anwar Hussain Transport, cooperation

H L Singson Relief and rehabilitation, jails, industries
Nokzenketba Soil conservation, arts and culture
Puse Zhotso Information and publicity, tourism, power
Bangjak Phom Civil defence, works and housing
Marchiba Fisheries, public health engineering
Nocklem Konyak Printing and stationary, agriculture
Yeangphong Konyak Physical education, sports, youth welfare
A Correspondent, Kohima

NSCN's Charmed Existence

The underground National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) continues to lead a charmed existence thanks to the totally conflicting views of the governments of Nagaland and Manipur on the aims and objectives of this rebel Naga organisation. For more than a year now, the Manipur Government led by Mr Rishang Keishing has been demanding a ban on the NSCN because of the violent activities it pursues in the state, particularly in its stronghold in Ukhrul district. Mr Keishing is on record as having told the Manipur Assembly that the NSCN, since its formation in February 1980, has killed 94 civilians in Ukhrul district alone besides carrying out ambushes of security force personnel from time to time. The latest such ambush took place on 18 February this year at Chassad in Ukhrul district eight kms from the Indo-Burma border in which 14 army personnel were shot dead.

Apart from this, the NSCN is supposed to be responsible for the assassination of former Manipur chief minister, Mr Yangmasho Shaiza in Imphal on 30 January last year. In addition, it made an attempt on Mr Keishing's life in Ukhrul district in December 1984 when he was going to campaign in his Phungyar constituency for the Assembly polls. Although Mr Keishing escaped the NSCN's bullets, four jawans of the Manipur Rifles died in the ambush during which shots were exchanged from both sides for almost 30 minutes.

Interestingly, for more than a year now the Nagaland government, particularly chief minister S. C. Jamir, has been claiming that it has established contacts with the NSCN and that the organisation has shown interest in holding talks with the government of India and joining the national mainstream. The delay in the centre's decision to ban the NSCN is reported to be prompted by this stand of the Nagaland government as it is felt that no purpose would be served by banning an organisation which wants to join the national mainstream. Asked about the nature of contacts that the Nagaland government had established with the NSCN, Mr Jamir told SUNDAY, "We have not only established contact with the NSCN but also with other underground Naga factions." He said that contact with the NSCN was established through the Peace Council in

the state and maintained that the response from the underground Nagas was "very encouraging."

In this context, it may be recalled that the leader of the opposition Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP), Mr Vamuzo, had said in the last session of the state Assembly that Jamir was bluffing the underground Nagas by telling them that the government of India was ready for talks with them, bluffing the centre by saying that the rebel Nagas were willing to hold talks with the central government and bluffing the people of Nagaland by telling them that a solution would be arrived at soon between Nagas and the Indian government. Mr Jamir, disagreeing with this, replied that as far his government was concerned, it treated all underground Naga factions in the same manner unlike the NNDP which, when in power, was known to support only a particular section of the underground.

Contrary to Mr Jamir's claims about the NSCN's willingness to have a peaceful solution to the so-called Naga problem, Mr Rishang Keishing says that whenever any person or a group on behalf of the Manipur government had approached the NSCN, it had rebuffed the peace emissaries by its hostile actions. According to Manipur government sources, the NSCN has been involved in various crimes including dacoities, robberies, murders, burglaries, rioting and thefts. This is addition to its "tax collection" drives in its areas of operation and the ambushes it carries out.

Although insurgent activity in Nagaland is far less than what it used to be in the Fifties and Sixties, it would be wrong to say that the NSCN has not carried out any operation in Nagaland. Last year,

NSCN men killed at least ten persons including seven security force personnel in the state. The incidents took place in the Mon, Phek and Tuensang districts.

The NSCN was also behind the recent three bank robberies at Pfutsero, Tizit and Dimapur and three of its men involved in this were shot dead in an encounter with the police at Lotovi village near Dimapur on 23 February, this year. In view of all this, it is quite understandable if the Manipur government feels that Nagaland's claims about the NSCN's desire to have a peaceful solution to the Naga problem is not backed by reality but something else. The NNDP feels that Mr Jamir has been working hard to prevent a ban on the NSCN as this underground organisation had backed Congress (I) candidates in Zunheboto, Mon and Tuensang districts during the 1982 Assembly elections in the state. Mr Jamir hotly denies this charge and maintains that it has got nothing to do with the delay in imposing the ban which, it says, is a matter to be decided entirely by the centre.

Even if what Mr Jamir says is true, it must be pointed out here that the NSCN, emboldened by the fact that it has not been outlawed so far, has developed political ambitions and had actively supported candidates of the Progressive Independent Bloc (PIB) during the district council elections in Manipur early last year. Unfortunately for the NSCN, PIB men drew a blank in the polls as none of its candidates got elected. Later, in December last year, the NSCN had made bids to disrupt the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Manipur but in this also it did not meet with any success because of the security forces which remained on the alert throughout and prevented the NSCN from keeping the people away from the polling booths, disrupting the counting or even snatching ballot boxes while they were in transit from the villages to the district headquarters. It is this, failure of the governments of Nagaland and Manipur to see eye to eye with respect to the NSCN which keeps on giving a fresh lease of life to Naga insurgency and unless the centre takes a tough stand it is hardly likely to alter its present course of violence which brings avoidable misery to the people.

Arvind Kumar, Kohima

The NNDP feels that Jamir has been working hard to prevent a ban on the NSCN as it had backed the Congress(I)

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Besides, we got things like crowbars and pickaxes made by local blacksmiths, so it helped those people as well." But, Mr Chishi, could not the money have been used more profitably by buying other goods with the same amount of money, rather than buying a few things at exorbitant rates?

On 6 January 1984, a police vehicle (NLP 1581), a Hindustan Bedford truck belonging to the Nagaland armed police was unofficially requisitioned at the residence of the minister of social welfare, Kiyezhe Sema. Subsequently, the truck was

taken by the minister's bodyguard, Khuvito Sema, across the border into Manipur, ostensibly to collect firewood from Ukhrul. However, on the way back the truck was stopped by Assam Rifles personnel at Kharasom Lezo village in Manipur's Ukhrul district. But the truck, instead of stopping picked up speed and crashed through the check post. Suspecting that the truck was carrying Naga extremists, the Assam Rifles men opened fire at the truck and brought it to a halt. A search followed, and instead of extremists 27 bags of ganja (cannabis) were recovered. What in fact had happened was that the minister's bodyguard

had been smuggling ganja into the state in a police truck requisitioned in the name of the minister and which had picked up the bodyguard from the minister's residence. No one is suggesting that Kiyezhe Sema was involved in the smuggling operation but ethics demanded that he resign from office following this scandal. Besides, as this was a regular practice, could the minister have been totally oblivious of the activities of his own bodyguard, who was very close to him? Constable Khuvito was not only from the same village as the minister (Aichisaghem in Zunheboto district), but is also related to him. (The minister however, told this cor

Mr Jamir Defends His Government

• On the achievements of his government

The state government has been able to maintain peace, law and order which no other state in our condition has been able to do. Compared to the other states in this region Nagaland is most peaceful even though it has a long history of insurgency. In this effort, the people of Nagaland have also played a helpful role as they have become development conscious. It is true that in the past few years insurgency was a big problem, but now that problem is confined to the borders.

• On development in the state

For all these years we have been asking for a general hospital, a separate university, a college of engineering, a stadium complex at Kohima, a new secretariat complex, a mining school, a polytechnic for women, a youth hostel at Dimapur, a music school etc. All these projects have been approved by the centre for implementation during the Seventh Plan. Besides, the most important thing is the opening of the foothills road—a 300 km stretch that cuts through the rice bowl of the state. In addition to this, electricity and water supply links are very well-connected. Now villages are connected with proper roads and electricity has reached there.

Also, Nagaland has a special scheme for the educated unemployed, with a total yearly outlay of Rs 50 lakhs since 1982. This provides the youth gainful employment in dairy farms, piggeries, etc.

• On the reasons for the massive deficit in the state

The main reason for this is *jhum*

cultivation, which leaves large stretches of land infertile.

• On what the government intends to achieve under the Seventh plan

We have selected certain fields as core sectors, like roads, communication, bridges, agriculture and allied sectors like rural development and cottage industries. Nagaland missed the first three plans (it was then a part of Assam), and in the Fourth Plan only a token amount was allotted. The state really went in for development from the Sixth Plan and the Seventh Plan is going to be the first plan under which my government is going to plan.

• On corruption in the state

For the first time since our party came to power in the state, we told all leaders and people occupying public positions to declare their assets. But nobody did. And people may happen to have land in the villages and this is difficult to determine. However, according to the directives of the Prime Minister, with his stress on cleanliness, we shall see that every paisa meant for developmental works during the Seventh Plan is utilised. Besides, I reshuffled the portfolios of ministers in April 1985, to ensure that there was minimum holding of portfolios by the ministers and to increase efficiency and effectiveness and lessen chances of corruption, delay, etc.

• On charge of people making money through fictitious bills

One case like this was raised in the Assembly, but we verified it and it was found to be not true. This concerned a Congress worker called Lhasu. I got my public works department to look into the matter.

In fact, I gave a long reply to it in the Assembly.

• On the allegation that one of his ministers was involved in smuggling ganja

It is true that there was a case of smuggling in ganja but no minister was involved. In fact the person who was involved was the bodyguard of the minister who had taken a police vehicle and perpetrated the crime. The minister in question Kiyezhe Sema, was not even in town he was out on a tour when the incident took place.

• On the disposal of galvanised iron (GI) pipes at throw away prices

When we went to the Planning Commission to discuss the plan for 1984-85 they told us to dispose surplus material to reduce the resource gap. Since the GI pipes constituted a part of our surplus stores, he decided to dispose of them. Naturally, they were sold at prices lower than the ones at which we bought them.

• On charges that there has been corruption in implementation of rural development schemes

There have been complaints about central purchase of material for the rural development schemes. Yes, we have received such complaints but they are mainly confined to a certain material that the government has purchased for the villages— asbestos sheets for roofing of huts. It is also true that the villagers have not utilised them and they are lying on the roadside. But that is only because they are heavy to transport to the villages.

The Congress(I)'s NSCN Link

On 23 February this year, three persons belonging to the underground National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) were killed in an encounter with the Nagaland police at Lotovi village, about ten kms from Dimapur. Among the three killed was one Mangwing Konyak who had led the police party to the NSCN hideout in Lotovi village. Mangwing, according to police sources, had been apprehended in Dimapur near a restaurant where he was supposed to be moving around in a mysterious manner. Along with Mangwing one more person identified as Poneyi Konyak was also taken into custody. Investigations revealed that Poneyi was the driver of the then Nagaland minister of state for printing and stationery, Mr C. Nocklem Konyak who now also holds charge of the agriculture portfolio. Although Poneyi has since been released on bail, the Nagaland police have now started checking ministers' vehicles specially when the ministers are not travelling in them. Earlier, a minister's car could be taken through all police check gates by his driver without any problem, but thanks to Poneyi the scenario has undergone a change which may not be to the liking of at least some ministers.

The important NSCN man supposed to have been killed in the 23 February incident at Lotovi was one "Colonel" Ihoshe who was in charge of NSCN's operations in the Dimapur area. Strangely enough, the Sema Students Union (SSU) alleged after Ihoshe's death that the chief minister S.C. Jamir had met this NSCN "Colonel" just a few days before his death. The chief minister, however, denied the SSU allegation and said that not only had he not met "Colonel" Ihoshe, during the latter's lifetime, but had not even seen his body after the Lotovi incident.

Although, it may not be proper to come to the conclusion that the minister of state, Nocklem, was in league with the NSCN just because his driver was arrested for suspected links with the NSCN or that Mr Jamir has ties with the NSCN, because a students' organisation alleges that he met an NSCN man, there is at least one minister of state in Nagaland who does not let his gubernatorial assignment come in the way of being least inhibited by his helping the NSCN whenever

and wherever he can. He is Mr Kihoto Hollohon who belongs to the Sema tribe and holds the portfolio of excise in the Nagaland council of ministers. Mr Kihoto, it is learnt, had told the state police in February last year to release one person from whom a Chinese rifle, about Rs 11,000 in cash and some incriminating documents were recovered. The arrested man, Nivuto Sema's release was sought by Mr Kihoto on the grounds that he was known to him. Although Mr Kihoto's request was not granted immediately, Nivuto was let off on bail after a "quick" interrogation.

with regularity, particularly in the neighbouring state of Manipur.

The Chief Minister, Mr Jamir, has said on more than one occasion that his government has no links with the NSCN and has asserted that he treats all factions of the Naga underground as equals. He is also on record as having said that the decision to ban the NSCN has to be taken by the centre and that the state government has nothing to do with it. Another allegation made against Mr Kihoto was that a NSCN man injured in an incident at Lotovi on 23 February was treated at the minister's Dimapur residence.



NSCN guerrillas who surrendered to the security forces

The same minister, it may be recalled, had got published at a private printing press in Dimapur, 2,000 booklets on statements by NSCN functionaries. In all fairness to Mr Kihoto it must be stated that legally he has done nothing wrong in getting the copies printed or even in securing the release of NSCN man like Nivuto because the NSCN till today has not been declared an outlawed organisation. But the basic question is how far it is correct for a Congress(I) minister to sympathise with the NSCN, an organisation which has killed a number of security force personnel in various ambushes, besides indulging in extremist activities

Subsequently, there were rumours that the injured man died at the residence of Mr Kihoto. Interestingly, the intensity of the rumours can be judged from the fact that even officials from the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB) spoke to the Mr Kihoto to check the veracity of the rumour. According to SIB sources, the minister said there was no truth behind the rumour. But this is not limited to Congress(I) government. Even when the NNDP was in power, rebels belonging to Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN), an underground organisation, were trained at Chumukima in Rengma area.

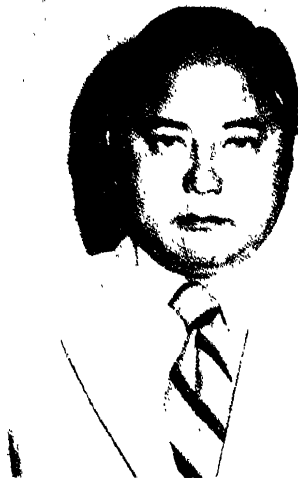
A Correspondent, Kohima

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respondent that "Khuvito is not a close relative.") Mr Kiyezhe's defence is: "I was on tour when the incident took place. I had left Kohima on 1 or 2 January and during my absence my bodyguard requisitioned the vehicle. I was only informed about the incident after my return to Kohima. I immediately instructed that my bodyguard be punished."

Mr Kiyeze is not the only minister to be unaware of what is happening around him. T.A. Ngullie, the finance minister, sits in a large well-furnished office, muses about the weather, makes clear his abhorrence for words like 'overdrafts' and says he is ignorant about the misdemeanours of his staff. Of course, he admits there might be a few irregularities but he is not aware of them.

But this is not the only thing that Mr Ngullie is unaware of. He is, for instance, unaware of the difference between the word 'overdraft' and 'deficit'; unaware of the amount of deficit that has accrued; unaware of how the deficit could be made up. Check, while presenting the 1984-85 budget in March 1984, Mr Ngullie had said in the Assembly that the opening deficit for 1984-85 was Rs 17.35 crores. But he promised that



K.L. Chishi

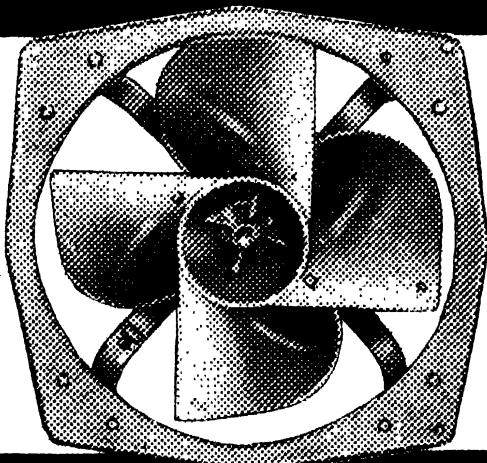
the closing deficit would be nil as the government of India had offered to "make it up." By August the same year however, the finance minister had changed his mind and instead said that the opening deficit would not be nil, but be around Rs 38.85 crores because the Reserve Bank of India had informed his ministry about the correct position only in June

that year. But, true to his style, Mr Ngullie again promised that the closing deficit would certainly be nil, as the centre had offered to make up even this amount. But when he presented the vote of account in March 1985, the opening deficit which should have been nil was around Rs 47 crores. And the anticipated deficit for 1985-86? Rs 84.12 crores.

But Mr Ngullie still maintains that this amount can be made up. Even by a considerable stretch of the imagination it is difficult to see how the finance minister can achieve this feat. A look at the revenue plan and non-plan account for the year 1984-85 (which is ready now) will make it clear. According to this, the total revenue receipts amount to Rs 162 crores—of which Rs 136 crores is the centre's contribution. And where does the bulk of this amount go? Towards repaying debts. In the year 1984-85 for instance, out of the total revenue receipts, Rs 115 crores were spent on repaying debts (including the interest). And where does the rest of the money go? Remember the saying in Nagaland: "For work done in the sky, the payment is made on earth."

Saumitra Banerjee, Kohima

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Fighting the Evil Spirit

Or how a 50-year-old alcoholics' association is going about reforming its members

I am an alcoholic. My name is Chandrasekhar," said the man with a deadpan voice. "By God's grace and with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) I am sober today. I am an accountant in a private firm. I was a hopeless drunk for more than 15 years. Then one day I came into contact with AA through my friend Bala. That was five years ago. Since then I have successfully managed to stay sober. Oh, but what hell I went through when I was a drunk. By the time I was 25 years old I had become an alcoholic—of course I refused to admit that then. I always said to myself, 'Me? An alcoholic? Never.' I am too strong-willed and aware to become an alcoholic, ever. Besides I can always control my drinking—or so I deluded myself. The daily sun-downers lasted till sunrise. Then I needed a stiff eye-opener. That calmed me till my wife came nagging. Boy, did I need another drink then. I just wanted to get out of the house—away from the haridan that my wife had become and my two snivelling brats. But office was no escape. My colleagues were a bunch of middle-class mediocrities, whose only interest lay in saving up to buy a scooter or a mixer—for heaven's sake, my boss was even worse. Look at fate, here I was far superior in

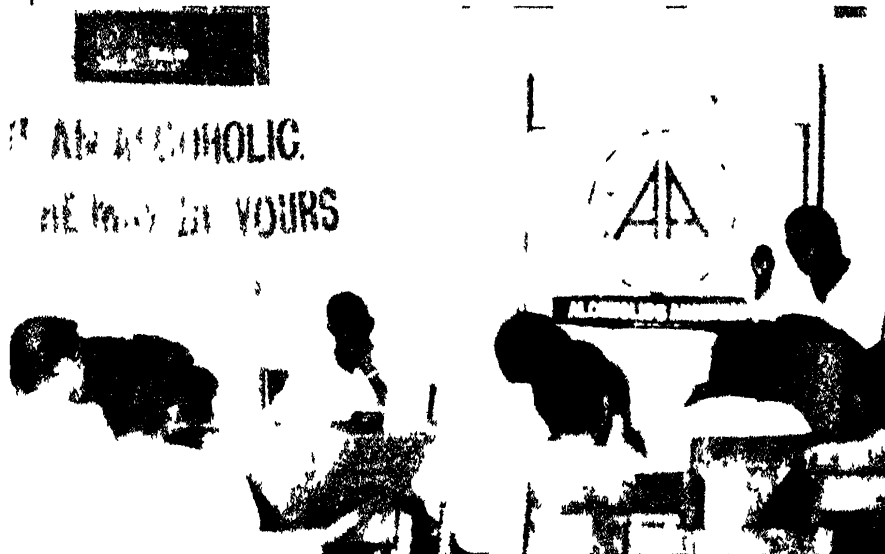
intellect, and yet having to serve under that bumptious cinin. I could only think of sneaking off for the lunch time shot of booze. Gradually everybody fell away from me—my family and my friends. I was alone. I didn't give a damn. It went on for sometime like that till I became tired and sick of the whole thing. I was physically ill. I couldn't bear the thought of getting up in the morning. Spiritually I was drained, morally bankrupt. One day I stole money from my son's piggybank to buy myself a little arrack (as my consumption increased I switched from brandy to rum to arrack, and as my dwindling finances) I don't know why my theft hit me like nothing else. I had to give up alcohol. I got myself hospitalised for a defogging session not once, but thrice. All three times I suffered a relapse within two months. I went and stayed in a monastery near Pune. One month after my return I was hitting the bottle again. I tried everything—yoga, transcendental meditation, changing my house. Nothing worked. By this time I was desperate. I was terrified. And then the miracle happened. Bala walked into my life. He was an ex-problem drinker who was now sober thanks to AA. At first I was reluctant. But Bala's problem seemed to have been worse. Gradual-

ly I persuaded myself to give AA a chance. By the grace of God AA helped me to stay sober for five years."

Chandrasekhar is one of nine persons seated in a circle in a community hall. The room is large, empty of furniture except for a few steel foldable chairs. The ceiling fan whirs monotonously. The men are seated and talk in turns quietly and eloquently. It is a typical AA meeting in progress. The nine men are among the 60 million men and women all over the world who thanks to AA have been able to conquer their alcohol drinking problem.

AA celebrated its golden jubilee on 10 June 1955. Started in Akron, Ohio in the USA, AA today has 50,000 branches in 114 countries with a membership of over two million. It was started by two alcoholics—an Akron physician named Dr Robert Holbrook Smith, popularly called Dr Bob, and a New York stock broker named William Griffith Wilson popularly called Bill W. AA got going on 10 June 1935 when Dr Bob took his last drink. He remained a teetotaler till 1950 when he died of cancer. The Madras chapter of AA had many false starts, the first being in 1968. It really became a full-fledged functional association in 1981. Today there are AA groups in all the major cities of India. The Indian chapter of AA will celebrate its golden jubilee in Bombay on 10 June and the international AA will celebrate it in Montreal on 4 July.

Precisely because it maintains a low profile, AA is often considered to be a subterranean cult. What exactly is AA? It is a voluntary informal fellowship of ex-problem drinkers who meet together to maintain sobriety and to help fellow problem drinkers (who have often been considered medically hopeless) to stay off alcohol. The only requirement for membership is "a desire to stop drinking." There are no dues, fees or attendance regulations governing AA membership. Prima facie it seems to be a loose knit organisation. Yet on coming into contact with AA, this correspondent found that the fellowship among the members was so strong that it rivals the kind of brotherhood that one sees in certain



An Alcoholics Anonymous meet in progress in Madras

religious sects

Who is an alcoholic? What is the distinction between a heavy drinker and an alcoholic? Often the alcoholic is the last one to concede that he is addicted to alcohol while his relatives, who stood by him through "hick and gin" as it were, would have been convinced of his condition long ago. But by every form of self-deception, rationalisation and experimentation, an alcoholic will prove to himself that he is an exception to the rule. An alcoholic is one who has lost the ability to control his drinking. There is a simple test to judge whether you are an alcoholic. Go to a bar or wherever you normally get soured and indulge in some controlled drinking. If normally you take six peps, try to stop abruptly after the third. If you can't or if you get the jitters face it: you are an alcoholic. The important thing is that the amount of alcohol consumed is not a yardstick of alcoholism. The crucial point is whether your drinking is unmanageable. Is it interfering with your lifestyle, your obligations and responsibilities as a son, husband or father? An alcoholic cannot control his drinking because of his intense and irrepressible craving.

Once an alcoholic always an alcoholic. Sad but true. Alcoholism is a permanent condition. Even the AA members who have stayed sober for 15 years continue to call themselves alcoholic because they can never indulge in controlled drinking. One drink leads to another and another and another. Alcoholics are in the grip of a progressive illness that can be arrested but not cured. A dry alcoholic cannot indulge in social drinking a couple of peps with friends. For him it is nothing or everything. His only salvation lies in total abstinence. To this day science has not been able to make a normal drinker out of an alcoholic.

AA had evolved a programme of twelve steps which has helped lakhs of people to attain and maintain sobriety. Most members pointed out that more than attaining sobriety, AA has helped them to remain sober. Sobriety itself has to be achieved through a defogging session in a hospital because the withdrawal symptoms are so severe that they require medical treatment. But the most difficult thing for an alcoholic is to stay sober and here AA has helped like nothing else has of course there are few persons who have not been refitted by AA but the association's percentage of success is overwhelmingly high.

Psychiatrists, doctors and family members often find it impossible to break the barrier of reserve around



Dr Bob and Bill W., co-founders of the Alcoholics Anonymous

the alcoholic. But the ex-alcoholic can win the confidence of the newcomer in a matter of hours. This is because the newcomer finds that his trauma and nightmares, which he thought was unique, has been experienced by other fellow alcoholics. The shift of empathy pierces the veil of isolation. His deadened sensibilities reawaken as he is engulfed by hope—if these people were able to steer clear of alcohol with the help of AA, so can he.

The first step to recovery is the awareness that he is an alcoholic. The delusion that one day he will be able to control his drinking like the others around him has to be smashed. AA's twelve-point programme rests upon the belief that an alcoholic is powerless. He can beat the liquor demon only by surrendering himself totally to a power greater than himself. His ideals must be grounded in a greater power if he is to recreate his life again. An orthodox being would classify this "power" as god. But alcoholics invariably are agnostics, if not atheists. As they contemptuously dismiss the concept of god, they identify this power as "creative intelligence," "universal mind," "energy," "love," "spirit of nature," "cosmic force," etc. A member of AA must have his own conception of God. It is not imposed upon him. But what happens in the case of an alcoholic who does not believe in any force other than himself? The AA member who was taking this correspondent on a guided tour of the association's world replied, "There is an AA member in Sri Lanka. He is an atheist and a communist. But today he is dry. He developed faith when he saw his friends, all declared medically hopeless, recover after following the AA programme." Very often members of AA have started out by believing that human intelligence is

the beginning and the end of every thing. They saw faith and dependence upon a power beyond themselves as somewhat weak, even cowardly. But it has often been found that faced with alcoholic destruction, the victim often learnt to develop an open mind about spirituality (which is not to be confused with religiosity).

Ultimately faith has given him purpose and direction, stability and happiness. Many AA members have found the 12 steps intimidating. But then nobody is expected to adhere to all the steps immediately. As the bible of AA states, "We are not saints. We claim spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection." The AA charter also includes making a moral inventory and apologising to the people he has hurt. This has often posed the biggest obstacle to many an alcoholic. Admitting his flaws to the power to himself and to fellow beings is galling, more so because he is so arrogant and opinionated. It is a painful and difficult process because it is humbling and humiliating. But the formidable task is made easier when he talks to an AA member who not only understands him but can keep his confidence.

Anonymity is sacred to AA which is why even membership registers are not kept. In AA the word "anonymous" has immense spiritual significance. It reminds them always to place principles before personalities, that they have renounced personal glorification that their movement not only preaches but practises a true humility. Anonymity is vital to AA because many of its members are businessmen or professionals who would not be able to carry on their occupations if it were to be known that they are alcoholics.

Apart from the 12 steps, AA has evolved 31 tips to remain sober. First

on the list stay away from the first drink. AA members do not swear to go off drinking for ever. They just take a pledge to stay away from the first drink one day at a time. How? If they don't take the first drink they don't get drunk. It is as simple as that. This they can do by constantly reminding themselves that alcoholism is an incurable progressive fatal illness. Simply trying to avoid a drink (or not thinking of one) is often not enough. The more a dry alcoholic thinks about the drink he is trying to keep away from the more it occupies his mind. And that is no good. It is better to get busy with something so that his approach is hostile in that he uses his mind and energy to maintain

his health.

The activity could take the form of involvement with AA, taking a walk, reading, going to museums and art galleries, physical exercise, starting on long neglected chores like cleaning out his drawers, reviving or pursuing a new hobby, taking a course etc. Often it is good to change routines, familiar places and regular activities associated with drinking as this can often prove to be fatal traps to an ex-alcoholic's sobriety. Eating or drinking something sweet often quells a desire to have a drink. It is very important for an ex-alcoholic to take plenty of rest. People who drink heavily often do not realise how tired they are because of three reasons—

first because alcohol is full of calories which give instant energy, secondly it numbs the central nervous systems so that he cannot feel bodily discomfort and thirdly after its anaesthetic effect wears off, it produces agitation that feels like nervous energy. For a person who has stopped drinking it is vital to take plenty of rest because the notion of having a drink begins to nag when he is tired. Ending off loneliness, watching out for anger and resentment, sorrow and overelation, avoiding all chemical mood changers and being wary of drinking occasions are ways to keep the dreaded first drink at bay.

Anita Pratap

Alcoholism, a Disease

In India however, it is still seen as an evil.

There is still debate over the issue but the preponderance of evidence leads to the conclusion that alcoholism is an illness. There is a basic chemical imbalance in an alcoholic's system so that when he consumes alcohol he becomes sick not just physically but emotionally, mentally and spiritually. This is why alcoholism is worse than a lot of other major illnesses. It is not just a disease; it is a highly complex, multi-dimensional ailment that affects the victim and all his companions. In its wake, alcoholism leaves not just a physical wreck but a psychologically, socially and occupationally devastated man. In countries like the USA and Australia, alcoholism is recognised and treated as a disease. Not in India where there is social stigma attached to the affliction. No one is sympathetic to an alcoholic because it is commonly believed that he is wilfully destroying himself. What is even more despicable is that with his self-indulgence he is ruining the happiness of his innocent family. When inebriated he can be offensive, opinionated, repetitive and incoherent, not exactly virtues that get to his credit. His equivocation and quibbling can be maddening. Not only does one react to the individual with hostility but one rapidly loses respect for him when he cuts a sorry figure, pontificating on unsteady feet.

The American Medical Association and the World Health Organisation as well as many other professional groups have come to regard alcoholism as a specific disease. To quote the manual on alcoholism issued by

AA, "Alcoholism is an illness characterised by preoccupation with alcohol and loss of control over its consumption such as to lead usually by chronicity, by progression and by tendency toward relapse. It is typically associated with physical disability and impaired emotional, occupational and/or social adjustment. It is a direct consequence of persistence and excessive use."

Many years ago an experiment was conducted which went a long way to prove that alcoholism is a disease. Alcohol was injected into rats which normally do not touch the stuff. After some time a bowl of alcohol and a bowl of water were placed before rats. They made a beeline for the alcohol. It is felt that a metabolic disorder makes a man alcoholic. In the normal drinker, alcohol is oxidised into acetaldehyde which then becomes acetic acid which after being broken down further is secreted from the body. But in the case of an alcoholic something else happens in them: a very small quantity of acetaldehyde remains and instead of being eliminated goes to the brain where through a very complicated biochemical process it ends up as Thiopental, a barbiturate-like substance and equally addictive. This gets implanted in the brain cell. Experiment on animals have proved the addictive nature of Thiopental which is believed to be responsible for the uncontrollable craving. The pathological aspects (relating to signs and symptoms) of alcoholism manifest in delirium tremens, cirrhosis of the liver, wet brain, cardiac complications, de-

terioration of mental faculties and personality disorders. An alcoholic is said to go through three stages of drinking. He starts with social drinking, detaches to symptomatic drinking which finally culminates in addictive drinking, considered to be the terminal stage. Reluctant drinking (from punishment or temptation) is a classic early sign of a potential alcoholic. Reluctant drinking graduates to psychological dependence on alcohol. This is an indication of the progression of the disease into the intermediary stage. Some detectable symptoms are absenteeism from work, poor job performance, financial problems, family problems, changes in moral and ethical behaviour, sexual problems like impotence (one is reminded of Shakespeare's warning, "It—alcohol spurs the desire but robs the action"). It interferes with the learning process, power of attention and concentration. It also impairs the faculties of judgment and discrimination and clouds the ability to think and reason clearly.

It is undeniably true that an alcoholic cannot control his drinking because he is maladjusted to life in full flight from reality or mentally defective. Sometimes it is a combination of all three. But doctors in the west have testified that the body of an alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. An alcoholic has to be freed from his physical craving for liquor and this often requires a definite hospitalisation procedure before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit. If a person has cancer, all are sorry for him. No one

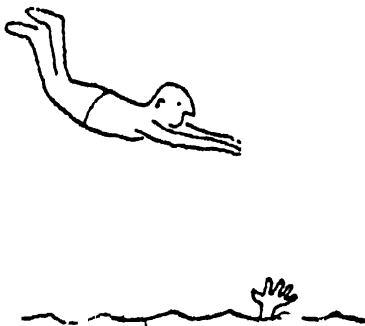
is angry, hurt or hostile. But alcoholism brings with it misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, sad, frustrated and disillusioned wives (or husbands) and parents and warped lives of innocent children. Alcoholism is a three pronged illness—physical, emotional and spiritual. At the same time the alcoholic's relationships are steadily destroyed. Emotionally, he becomes bankrupt. As the disease goes into the terminal stage, he is spiritually drained—he loses all moral values, loses sight of his responsibility as a father, son or husband. He may pawn or sell his wife's jewellery to get money for a drink, he may beat her and abuse her, he may rob, lie, cheat, manhandle and even kill for the sake of a drink.

When it comes to the aetiology (causes) of alcoholism one comes across the belief that some people are born alcoholics. There is still a debate over this, but after talking to innumerable alcoholics this correspondent found that all of them believed they had latent personality disorders in their childhood which was responsible for their drinking heavily later. The personality disorders were camouflaged but came right out in the open when they were drunk. The personality disorders were remarkably similar in most alcoholics. Almost all of them said they were lonely in their childhood though they may have been with friends or siblings. Though they were a part of their peer group they never belonged to them. There seemed to be a distance between them and the world. Outwardly they kept a happy front but deep down they were lonely, confused, unhappy. They were all self-centred and always wanted to be the centre of attraction "the bride at a wedding, the corpse at a funeral."

They considered themselves superior in intellect and so could not relate to the people of their own age group. This also contributed to their sense of isolation. They hated to be saddled with responsibility and always managed to find an excuse to wriggle out of obligations. They were never able to sustain interest in any one subject or hobby. They were mercurial. They were perfectionists, who set high standards for themselves which they very often could not keep up to. But they hated to admit failure, least of all to themselves. They considered themselves to be "fixers." If anyone came for some help they would gladly promise them the sky, fully knowing they would not be able to deliver the goods. They were gripped by a fear complex, they felt something disastrous would happen to them. And if something went wrong they

Sobriety is

more than just staying dry



Sobriety is

realising that the situation is less important than our attitude towards it



could never accept the blame. The blame would be neatly and squarely placed on someone else—invariably the wife or parent or brother. Even though in reality it may all have been his fault. For instance, when he fails to kick start a recalcitrant scooter, he curses the country's substandard motor products. He conveniently overlooks the fact he has not serviced his two wheels for years.

He is also emotionally immature. Very often it can be traced to a cruel, remote or overindulgent parent. Divorce, separation or violent family quarrels can produce neurotic children who are poorly equipped emotionally to face the ordinary realities of adult life. In seeking escape, some may choose to become workaholics, others alcoholics. Drinking bolsters his opinion of himself and temporarily wipes away any feelings of social inferiority which he may have. The drinker smoulders with resentment and wallows in self-pity. He indulges in childish rationalisations to justify his drinking. He has been working hard and deserves to relax. He has to cope up with too many responsibilities, his wife does not understand him, his nerves are jumping, everybody is against him, nobody loves him and so on. Another interesting aspect is that the alcoholic is invariably the only child, or the only son in a large family of daughters, or vice versa or the youngest child. This probably was responsible for his loneliness and sense of alienation. In fact, the co-founders of AA, Dr Bob and Bill, were both the only sons. When it comes to personality disorders one is confronted with the "chicken and egg" syndrome. Do people inevitably become alcoholics (or take to other forms of addiction)

owing to personality disorders? Or do they develop these personality disorders because they are born alcoholics that is because they have a basic imbalance in their chemistry?

For the past several years, court decisions in the United States legally recognise alcoholism as a disease. In the USA a drunken offender has to compulsorily attend six months of AA meetings. The Indian chapter of AA is worried that alcoholism is not yet recognised as an illness in this country. An alcoholic is treated only for secondary illness—cirrhosis, for example. His essential problem is left unattended. So he returns home with an improved liver and unimproved alcoholism which wrecks him all over again. Even the private clinics that often help an alcoholic to dry out lose patients when the man turns up like a bad penny at predictable intervals.

An alcoholic is often arbitrarily condemned because it is believed that he is bringing catastrophe upon himself or because it is the end result of his weak willpower. Often alcoholism is construed as a moral, ethical and social problem. But evidence suggests that it is a disease—and no disease has been known to be cured by sheer willpower. At the same time just because it is a disease an alcoholic ought not to sit back and drink himself "helplessly" to death. An alcoholic cannot control his craving but he can take the decision to stop drinking by going for a detoxifying session in the hospital in a bid to arrest his progressive illness. He can then give AA a try. The decision to stop drinking requires willpower. And that is something only he can muster.

Anita Pratap

AKALI DAL

Longowal Wins Battle for Supremacy

Inner-party conflict overshadows anti-government agitation

In the sad and sometimes tragic battle among the Akalis, going on for the last three years, there has been a recent and dramatic development. The battle lines between the moderates and the hardliners have never been so clearly drawn and the fight is now in the open. Sant Harchand Singh Longowal on one side leads the doves or the moderates in the Akali Dal. On the other side is Baba Joginder Singh, the new leader of the militant Akalis. As things stand today, it is apparent that the internal infighting in the Akali Dal is more serious than the party's fight against the centre.

In fact, Longowal (G. S. Talwandi, Prakash Singh Badal and now Joginder Singh seem more concerned about the fight for supremacy in the party and it would not be wrong to say that for the moment, the Akalis' fight against the government is petering out.

The developments in Akali politics are always swift and unpredictable. From 1 May when Baba Joginder Singh in a sudden move merged the different factions of the Akali Dal and announced the formation of an ad hoc committee for "panthic unity" till 22 May, Bhindranwale's father was in the driver's seat. He had won each round against Longowal and many Punjab watchers had thought that Longowal's innings was over and it was time for him to retire from politics. But Longowal fought back. On 8 May, when Longowal resigned as the Akali Dal president, his critics felt that the moderate leader had decided to give up the fight. But Longowal proved to be cleverer. He addressed his resignation to the district jathedars of the party and it proved to be a clever move. Said a Longowal aide, "He is quite shrewd. By resigning from the party presidency, he only wanted to build up his image in the Sikh community. He wanted to tell his community that he is not after power or a position. That was in fact a tactical move to silently crush Baba Joginder Singh. Longowal knew that the district jathedars would not accept his resignation since all of them belonged to his camp and his move succeeded."

On 22 May, a meeting of the dis-

trict and state Akali jathedars from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Delhi and Chandigarh was held. In all, there are 26 Akali jathedars, 18 from Punjab alone and the rest from the other states and the union territories. The meeting was held at Amritsar and in the Golden Temple complex, the venue of the crucial meeting hummed with activity since the morning. A large number of Akali workers and members of the youth wing of the Akali Dal, a majority of them in *kesari* turbans roamed about in the temple complex. They were shouting only one slogan—"Sant Harchand Singh Longowal".



Longowal

al *"zindabad"*. Even then, the message was clear.

The jathedars' meeting started in the famous Teja Singh Samundari Hall, which was badly damaged during Operation Bluestar. Parts of the building still bear the marks of heavy artillery shelling and the ceiling fans are still missing. All the 26 Akali jathedars were present to consider the resignation of the party chief, while nearly 50 reporters waited anxiously outside for the "big story". Minutes before the meeting ended, after nearly four hours of deliberations, Ranjit Singh Brahm-pura, a former Akali MIA and the district jathedar of Amritsar district (rural) came out of the hall. As

anxious newsmen gathered around him, Brahm-pura, originally belonging to the Badal group and now with Baba Joginder Singh said, "This conference has no right to reject the resignation of the party president. And, now if Longowal has tendered his resignation, the meeting should have accepted the resignation," before he left the meeting.

Fifteen minutes later, briefing newsmen about the jathedars' meeting, the Akali Dal secretary Gurdev Singh disclosed that barring Brahm-pura, all the 25 party jathedars had rejected Longowal's resignation and directed him to take over as the party president. This was the first resolution passed at the meeting presided over by Amar Singh Nalhu, a senior party leader and district jathedar from Patiala. But the revolt of the Akali moderates against the hardliners in the party became clear in the second resolution which rejected the merger of different factions of the party and the appointment of the ad hoc committee by Baba Joginder Singh. The resolution stated "No individual has any right to dissolve the party." The other resolutions passed at the meeting were of a routine nature condemning the government for passing the Terrorist Act and warning Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal.

When approached for his reaction about the decisions taken at the meeting of the Akali district jathedars, Baba Joginder Singh, the acting convener of the "united" Akali Dal told newsmen, "Today, I will not tell you anything. I will give my reaction tomorrow." The next day Baba Joginder Singh had called a meeting of the ad hoc committee—the first after its formation on 1 May. Interestingly, the acting convener of the committee held an informal meeting with the three other members of the committee—Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Gurdev Singh Shant, substitute member for Harinder Singh, former Indian diplomat in Norway who resigned from the Indian Foreign Service in protest against the June army action and Jagjit Singh, elder brother of Bhindranwale in the government circuit house of Amritsar. After the meeting, he told newsmen, "The meeting of the district jathedars was illegal."

NEWS

They had no authority to reject Longowal's resignation. Longowal should have addressed the resignation to me and sent it to the ad-hoc committee. Anyway, ours is the real Akali Dal."

In the afternoon, Joginder Singh held another meeting with three committee members in the new office of the party's ad-hoc committee. This time, Inderjit Singh Sekhon, the general secretary of the "united" Akali Dal, Harcharan Singh, an Akali leader from Delhi, Atma Singh, former Punjab health minister and Ranjit Singh Brahm-pura also attended the small conclave. Sekhon, later read out a press statement issued by the ad-hoc committee convenor. The baba expressed "grief" over the attitude of Longowal, Tohra and Badal for not joining the ad-hoc committee. He said, "I formed the committee for forging a

panthic unity after Longowal and Talwandi authorised me to do so in writing." He also decided to hold a panthic convention in the Manji Sahib Hall within the Golden Temple on 6 June "to pay homage to those killed during Operation Bluestar and to chalk out the policy programme of the party."

Akali politics has become increasingly complex. The confused leadership have no clear policy programme before itself. Even the goals are vague. With communal tension slowly building up in the troubled state after violent clashes in towns like Dhariwal, Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana during the last month and the Akali leadership still in quandary, peace in Punjab in the near future is just a dream.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

MRS GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

The Trial Begins

Strict security inside Tihar jail

The trial of the three persons accused in the Indira Gandhi assassination case began in Delhi's Tihar Central Jail on 13 May—as the capital was recovering from a bloody terrorist attack which had claimed 42 lives. While terrorists behind the disastrous bomb-blasts were being taken into custody and hundreds more being interrogated by the police, a small room inside prison number three of Tihar Jail became the scene of one of the most historic trials in India's history. It is in this makeshift courtroom that the three accused persons in the Indira Gandhi assassination case—Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh—are facing trial. Interestingly, one of the persons who was rounded up for interrogation because of suspected terrorist links, was Tirlok Singh, father of Satwant Singh, prime accused in the case. Tirlok Singh who was in the capital to attend the trial and have a *mulakat* with his son, was released by the police after a day and has not been attending the court in Tihar Jail since.

At the centrestage of the trial is 56-year old additional district and sessions judge, Mahesh Chandra who will preside over the special court. Mahesh Chandra, has tried over 100 murder cases and has not pronounced a death sentence till date. He is also presiding over the trial of Ranjit Singh, accused for the murder of the Nirankari Baba in Delhi. The trial of Ranjit Singh is the only other

trial (besides the Indira Gandhi trial) to be conducted inside Tihar Jail.

Mahesh Chandra, prior to the commencement of the trial proceedings had been under considerable pressure from the counsel of the accused (P.N. Lekhi and R.S. Sodhi for Satwant Singh and P.P. Grover for Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh) to make this a public trial. Lekhi had threatened to boycott the proceedings if the trial was held *in camera*. When the proceedings began on 13 May, the judge announced that the proceedings would not be *in camera* but what could be called a restricted-entry trial. Permission was granted by the court for a limited number of Indian and foreign mediamen to cov-

er the trial. Said Chandra: "We want the world to know that this is a fair and open trial. We have made special arrangements for some mediamen to cover the proceedings. However, this facility can be restricted later."

Temporary arrangements have been made by the jail authorities, supervised by jail superintendent, A.B. Shukla for mediamen covering the trial. On the day of the hearing, the gates by the side of the jail superintendent's residence are opened for the mediamen. Only cars of the judge, counsel of accused and the public prosecutors are permitted till the entrance of the court. Mediamen are required to walk by the side of the high boundary walls of the jail and have to pass through two security checks before they can enter the court. Photographs for identification of each journalist are maintained in jail records and each medianian is checked by a body metal detector at the entrance and made to sign the jail register while entering and coming out of the court. All around the makeshift court, armed guards are positioned and inside, policemen in plain clothes sit between the journalists and lawyers.

Inside the crowded courtroom, the accused persons—armed police constable Satwant Singh, assistant in the directorate-general of supplies and disposals Kehar Singh and Delhi police sub-inspector Balbir Singh were seated inside a specially constructed bulletproof glass cage. While on the first day of the proceedings, the bulletproof cage was the size of a telephone booth, on 24 May, the cage was enlarged to a eight feet by six feet glass capsule. On the same day, arrangements were made for a wooden bench to be placed inside the glass cage, after Satwant Singh's counsel complained of him being tortured by the court as he had to stand for long hours. His counsel, P.N. Lekhi had asked Satwant Singh to lift up his *kurta* and show the judge, the wound on his back from the single bullet still lodged inside his body. The judge allowed the three accused persons to be seated during the trial and also ordered for the height of the glass cage to be reduced from ten feet to six feet to facilitate air circulation.

During the proceedings, all eyes were focussed on the alleged surviving assassin, 22-year-old Satwant Singh. For the mediamen, it is the first contact with the person accused of cold-blooded murder of the person he was paid to protect. Satwant Singh was absolutely calm and composed and listened to the proceedings with attention. Dressed in an off-white *kurta salwaar*, with a *kesri* coloured scarf around his neck and



Mahesh Chandra

Sandeep Shrivastava

gold embroidered Punjabi *jutis* (shoes), he could have passed off as an athlete or even a well-to-do college graduate. Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh, dressed in trousers and shirts, seemed less interested in the proceedings.

Balbir Singh, on several occasions complained in fluent English about the treatment meted out to him in jail and informed the judge about "discriminatory treatment" being given to him by the jail authorities. On 24 June, Satwant, speaking in Punjabi, also complained that his movements were being restricted and inadequate medical attention being given to him inside his cell. The matter of better facilities for the accused will be taken up by the court later. However, according to the jail superintendent, Shukla, all precautions are being taken by them and the rules of the jail manual being maintained for the accused persons. He denied reports that Satwant was being kept in solitary confinement and was not being allowed his daily

walk around the prison. "All I can say is that Satwant is being kept under the tight security, with another prisoner and is receiving the same attention given to other B class prisoners."

In the first two weeks of the proceedings, the trial did not begin in real earnest. Applications were moved by Jaswant Kaur, the wife of Kehar Singh, for the release of her son, Rajinder Singh who has been detained under the National Security Act. No argument could be heard in the court till 24 May, since Balbir Singh, had not appointed a counsel for his defence till then. Later, P.P. Grover, counsel for Kehar Singh too demanded the release of Rajinder Singh before the case could progress further. Till now, the counsel have been adopting dilatory tactics to prevent the actual proceedings to begin. It may be some time before serious deliberations in the case are taken up and prosecution witnesses produced for cross-examination.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

the centre opts for 1967 as a cut-off year to mollify the AASU. Mr Gandhi, it is believed, allowed Saikia to give full vent to his feelings, asking Chavan and defence minister Narasimha Rao not to interrupt. At one point, Mr Gandhi got up and adjusted the air-conditioner, as it was making too much noise and the soft-spoken Saikia's voice could hardly be heard. Saikia, however, began to feel that AASU and its ally the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) had been able to persuade the home ministry to accept its point of view. It is now no longer a secret that the North Block officials have been sending notes to the Prime Minister's secretariat asking for fresh Assembly polls in Assam, as demanded by the AASU.

Saikia told SUNDAY, that if the centre decides to hold the Assembly polls, "then I will not hesitate a bit to step down." The uncertainty about the solution of the foreigners' issue has cast a shadow on the revision of the voters' lists on the basis of the 1971 rolls and as a result, the work for the preparation of the 1971 rolls has slowed down considerably. Asked why the electoral officer had failed to finalise the drafts before the 20 February deadline, fixed by the chief election officer (CEO) as per his circular No. CEO/PS/ER/284 dated 7 January, Mr Mishra told SUNDAY, "There was a delay while training the police, revenue and forest staff in the task of scrutiny of list two of the enumerated cards, containing the names of those persons who cannot be traced either directly or through their linkage to the entries in the electoral rolls in 1971."

Moreover, the modalities for the disposal of the claims and objections relating to the draft rolls were sent by the Election Commission to the state only on 1 March. Subsequently, there was a modification to ensure that a voter of his own constituency can raise objections against any suspected voter living in any other constituency. This gave rise to confusion and till the third week of May, 1.94 lakh claims for the inclusion in the final lists and 1.57 lakh objections had been received by the registration officers. According to the modalities, the onus of proving a voter to be a non-citizen lies with the objector. Mr S. K. Tewari, additional CEO, told SUNDAY that birth certificates, land *pattas*, ration cards and even the academic record of children in schools would be treated as valid documents for considering the citizenship of a voter.

Mishra denied the allegations made by AASU that politicians and

ASSAM

No Early Polls

The "foreigners" issue yet to be settled

The fond hopes of Assam's Congress(I) chief minister Hiteswar Saikia to rush through the revision of electoral rolls in a bid to hold the pending Lok Sabha elections in late May or early June received a major setback recently with the state election machinery having 'failed' him. Till the third week of May, the draft rolls of only 94 Assembly constituencies out of a total of 126 segments have been published. In fact, the state's chief electoral officer P. Mishra told SUNDAY that it would not be possible to finalise the rolls before 30 June.

Another factor holding up the prospect of early polls in Assam is because the centre is emphasising more on the permanent settlement of the six-year-old "foreigners issue" than on arbitrarily going through a poll. A minister in the Saikia cabinet said, "New Delhi has firmly let the chief minister know that the solution of the aliens issue should be linked up with the pending Lok Sabha polls." Saikia had, thus far, been trying to convince the centre to treat both issues separately. But the elusive foreigners issue is now nearing solution even as there are reports that the talks between the home ministry and the All Assam Students

Union (AASU), have finally fallen through. On 6 May, Saikia was summoned by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi for a ten-minute meeting for the political affairs panel of the cabinet. According to an informed source, while Saikia stuck to 1971 as the cut-off year for detection of the aliens as well as the revision of electoral rolls, home minister S. B. Chavan preferred 1967 as the compromise cut-off date.

Saikia felt that the Congress(I) would forfeit the support of minority voters, their main support base, if

Hiteswar Saikia



the state government officials had "interfered" with the preparation of the draft rolls. He claimed that the rolls were released after the "most careful scrutiny" of list two of the enumerated cards. However, the agitators on the foreigners' issue and the minority leaders are up against the draft lists. While the leaders of the Citizens Rights Preservation Committee (CRPC) allege that over 38,000 names of the eligible minority voters have been struck off the rolls in the Karbi Anglong district alone the AASU leaders claim that the

increase of voters by 40 per cent in 88 constituencies over the 1971 final rolls confirms their suspicion of the inclusion of the names of a sizable number of foreigners in the draft lists.

The CRPC has demanded that the 1979 rolls be made the basis for the revision. Hiranya Bhattacharjee, a former DIG of the Assam police and now an important figure in the agitation movement said that as many as 63,468 objections filed in 1979 against the suspected foreigners were yet to be dealt with. He also

alleged that particulars of 3,18,000 infiltrators on whom the quit notices had been served, were not made available to the police and the revenue staff who verified the second list of the enumerated cards. With the Congress(I), the agitators and the minority community leaders viewing the rolls issue from their respective electoral angles, it appears that the revision issue will continue to the occupy centre stage of the controversy in Assam.

Santanu Ghosh, Silchar

POLITICS

Towards Closer Ties

Have the TDP and Congress(I) decided to be friends?

The days of confrontation with the centre on all possible issues by the Telugu Desam government appear to be over. The Parliament has recently passed the abolition of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council which has removed the major irritant in centre-state relations and has perhaps begun an era of friendly ties between the centre and the Andhra Pradesh government.

Chief minister N.T. Rama Rao's support to the Prime Minister on any action taken against terrorists is a result of the prompt action by the centre in introducing the Council Abolition Bill after the state Legislative Assembly had adopted a resolution recommending its abolition. In a statement telecast on Doordarshan, Rama Rao stated that the Andhra Pradesh government would support the union government fully on any step it took to counter terrorist activities. In the process, the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha has ceased to be hostile to the Congress(I). The Telugu Desam party (TDP) general secretary P. Upendra has said that the TDP and the Andhra Pradesh government have established "a rapport with the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi." Upendra claimed that relations between the TDP and the Congress(I) leadership had improved and that there was a welcome change in the attitude of the centre. The recent discussions between Rajiv Gandhi and N.T. Rama Rao and the meeting of the Prime Minister with the TDP members of Parliament have been marked by a positive reaction.

Both sides have been working quietly to remove the main irritants which had earlier marred the centre-state relations. Rajiv Gandhi has assured the AP chief minister that

the centre would consider making Hyderabad's Begumpet aerodrome an international airport—one of the demands, the TDP has been making. In a major reversal of policy, the central government has also raised the amount allocated for the Vishakhapatnam steel plant project from Rs 215 crores to Rs 750 crores for 1985-86. Without allowing any major controversy to develop, Rama Rao has laughed away the PM's reference in a lighter vein in Parliament that Andhra Pradesh was a sort of Disneyland, with the people living in a dreamland.

While there were elements in the state and the TDP who were willing to make an issue of the Prime Minister's interjection in Parliament on the lines of the controversy which raged after Rajiv Gandhi referred to Calcutta as a dying city, Rama Rao dismissed the whole subject by saying that Andhra Pradesh is a part of "Bharat" so the whole country



N.T. Rama Rao: centre's friend?

should be in the same state. The Telugu Desam Party sees a change in Rajiv Gandhi's attitude to the state government. He is more accommodative to the wishes of the ruling party in the state. In fact, the Legislative Assembly had passed a similar resolution in 1983 recommending that the upper house be abolished but the centre had made no effort to bring a Bill to that effect in Parliament. The 90 member Legislative Council has 48 Congress(I) members while the Telugu Desam has only 18 members. It is because of the Council that the Congress(I) was able to oppose the Telugu Desam in the Legislature since it did not have sufficient strength in the Assembly for raising any issue effectively. Now, a month after the passing of the resolution again, only the official assent of the President is required.

Another move which has resulted in the thawing of centre-state relations is the newly appointed APCC(I) president, J. Vengal Rao's directive to all party-men in the states to stop criticising the Telugu Desam Party just for the sake of criticism. In his first meeting at Gandhi Bhavan, former CM Vengal Rao asked Congressmen to "maintain a silence for a year" and not indulge in personal denigration of the TDP leader. Vengal Rao requested party-men to concentrate on rebuilding the party in the state and not waste their time in futile criticism. For the Telugu Desam members who have had to face crude and vulgar attacks on Rama Rao, Vengal Rao's directive is another sign of the Congress(I) high command's belief that the Telugu Desam is here to stay.

With elections out of the way for a long time and the Anti Defection Act making the toppling of state governments a difficult task, a new era of cordial relations between the two ruling parties is likely to continue in a state of "limited cooperation in the state." The Telugu Desam will no longer assume the role of an anti-Congress party in national politics.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

WEST BENGAL

Fishing in Troubled Waters

Drastic decline in fish production in the state

It is a night that Tapin Ganguli will never forget. He was asleep when about 40 armed men surrounded the area. They overpowered his men and tied them up, hacked his uncle to death and beat him up mercilessly. "They left me to die," he said. That was over five years ago. But in the *bheris*, the 10,000 acre expanse of land dotted with shallow flat-bottomed fishing ponds a few miles off the eastern fringe of Calcutta, things are hardly any different. Looting of fish and land grabbing not only continue but the trouble has gradually begun taking political colour. The *bheris* are shrinking in size because of rapid urbanisation

year-old musclemen has been employed by *bheri* owner for the past three years. "The thieves," he says disdainfully, "come often. If there are too many of them they beat us up and take away all the fish. Would he prefer to do something else? There is very little choice," he said.

Chances are frequent. Just a few months ago a gang of antisocials were taken by surprise on their way to loot a *bheri*. In the pre-dawn shootout four of them were killed. One owner claimed that he employed 25 men to guard his *bheris*. The police, he claimed, are scared of the dark and rarely patrol the area at night. Pay-offs to the local *thanas*

normally hectic activity in the *bheris*. It is the peak season, the catch at this time of the year is the highest. This year however, about 4,000 acres are dry. Water levels in others are perilously low. As Bimal Biswas, a wholesaler said, "Business is not just bad, it is terrible." Tarapada Naskar, a local fisherman agreed. They could in fact have been echoing the voice of everyone associated with the *bheris*.

From November 1984 to April this year (considered the peak fishing season) the *bheris* received no water. The reason goes back to the monsoon of 1984 when waterlogging in Calcutta had reached unprecedented levels. In order to prevent another catastrophe this year, the state irrigation department was entrusted with the task of excavating the canals linking the main Topsia-Chaubaga canal (also known as the Dhapa canal) to the *bheris* to increase their water holding capacity. The Dhapa canal fed by the pumping stations of T. Hala, Topsia and Chingrighata with the sewage waste of millions of east Calcutta's inhabitants, is the only source of water for the *bheris*. But while the connecting canals were excavated the *bheris* received no water (the sewage water also provides the nutrients for the fish) from November to the middle of last month. Work on the canal which progressed at a snail's pace continued till April this year.

While the excavations may have saved Calcutta from the floods, it has doomed the fisheries. As Ajay Sankar Ray, pointed out. The authorities claim that if the canals are not deepened, the city will be flooded during the monsoons but in that case, work should have begun earlier or more people assigned to the project. This year has been a washout for us, we have already lost Rs 3 to 4 crores."

With this time of the year being the non-fishing season in the other states, (which contribute 30,000 metric tonnes of the city's annual requirements of 55,000 tonnes), the decline of supply of fish from the *bheris* has been badly felt. Prices of fish in the city markets have soared. At the sprawling Gariahat market in south Calcutta, a kg of the popular Rohu sells for over Rs 50 up from Rs 30-35 barely six months ago. Prices of other varieties of sweet water fish have shown a similar upward trend.

West Bengal's minister of fisheries Kiranmay Nanda, however, blamed the irrigation department for their delay in re-excavating the canals. "They are responsible for the acute paucity of fish in Calcutta's markets," he said. While admitting that



Fishermen dragging away a boat from a dried up fish pond

Dip Baranjan

now face another threat to its life line, the irregular supply of water.

The law and order situation began to deteriorate just after the United Front government came to power in 1967, said Ganguli, a *bheri* owner. "Those were the days of pure anarchy when large mobs looted fish and demolished the *bheris*. Between 1967 and 1970 no *bheri* owner could enter the area," he recalled. He admits that things are a little better. There are fewer daylight dacoits, though robberies by armed men continue at night.

With the police too thinly spread in an area largely unpatrolable at night the *bheri* owners have been forced to build up their private armies. For muscle power they depend on local toughs. Linking a 23

he alleged are a must. While some owners of the fisheries accused the Left Front government of being unsympathetic about their problems, others are more scathing in their indictment. Ajay Sankar Roy, the owner of over 40 *bheris* openly accused the Left Front of encouraging anti-social elements in the area.

"They are not members of the ruling front but some of them have taken shelter under it," he said. The present government has not only failed to solve the law and order problem, but it is also anti *bheri*. Not only have their efforts to introduce rice cultivation in the area been unsuccessful, they have also ruined the fisheries," he added. Some *bheri* owners, he added, have already begun draining the *bheris*.

At this time of the year, there is

there was a severe law and order problem in the area, he denied that the Left Front government was responsible for it. But Left Front workers were active in the area, he acknowledged. The main reason for the problems, he claimed, was the prevailing socio-economic problems in the area. He accused the owners of large *bheris* of fomenting trouble by trying to subjugate owners of smaller *bheris*. "The owners pocketing most of the wealth, which breeds dissatisfaction among the poor in the locality. I want the *bheris* to be owned by the poor in the area," he said. "Only if the larger *bheris* were broken down into smaller plots and leased out to cooperatives, the law and order problem would be solved," he added.

He denied that the government

was planning to convert the areas for agricultural purposes. "It would be wrong to do that," he maintained. "as it is the government's policy to help the poor people in the area and provide enough fish for the Calcutta markets." The government's policy is already paying dividends, said Nanda. According to him, the state government-run Captain Bheri Fishermen's Society has already been a major success. Its yield is double that of the other fisheries, he pointed out.

Besides being a main source of fish for the city, the *bheris* are also an ecological safety valve. Said A.K. Sen, joint director of fisheries, West Bengal. "The algae in the fish ponds help to keep up the level of atmospheric oxygen. Any reduction in the acreage under the fisheries, could

upset the city's ecological balance. The *bheris* are also the dumping ground for a part of the city's raw sewage. The untreated wastes, a major pollutant, are treated naturally in the *bheris*. It is imperative that the *bheris* now only 10,000 acres in area should not be reduced. "In the interests of the environment and the proper fish supply to the Calcutta markets, a stable scientific decision based on ecological factors will have to be taken," he said. "We want to maintain the area," agreed Nanda. "It is essential to maintain the ecological balance as well as properly dispose of the city's sewage. Besides, the government has to give fish to the masses, we can't manufacture fish in the factories."

Srinjoy Chowdhury, Calcutta

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

"Vajpayee is Destroying his Career by Being in the BJP"

Rajinder Puri told SUNDAY

Rajinder Puri, cartoonist, columnist and politician, had joined the Bharatiya Janata Party "solely on trust." A year after he had left the Lok Dal (in the 1980 elections Puri had opposed Atal Behari Vajpayee from New Delhi on a Lok Dal ticket) following the Charan Singh Raj Narain quarrel, BJP president Vajpayee and party general secretary Advani had invited Puri to join the BJP. Now that "trust" is missing. On 12 May Vajpayee wrote to Puri asking him to resign from the national executive of the party as he had been "unable to abide by the discipline imposed by the membership of the national executive." The next day Puri resigned from the primary membership of the party. Though the immediate cause of his resignation was that the party leadership had objected to his going to the press and criticising Advani's meeting with the Prime Minister, the grounds for quitting had been prepared much earlier. Puri had resigned from the national executive and the primary membership of the BJP as far back as 10 December 1984, saying that he disagreed with the "strategy of the party" and its style of functioning. That resignation, however, was not made public on Puri's request, in view of the impending elections. Once they were over, the party leadership convinced him to stay on. But, as Puri told SUNDAY, he had to quit

the party anyway. Excerpts from an interview in which he talked about his resignation and the BJP.

Q What led to your resignation from the party?

A I had criticised the general secretary of the party and the party unit in Maharashtra for flouting the decisions of the national executive of the party. The Congress(I) as you know had been making very inside remarks about the BJP and the opposition as a whole. The Prime Minister speaking on Punjab had said that we were anti-national. So in the national executive of the party

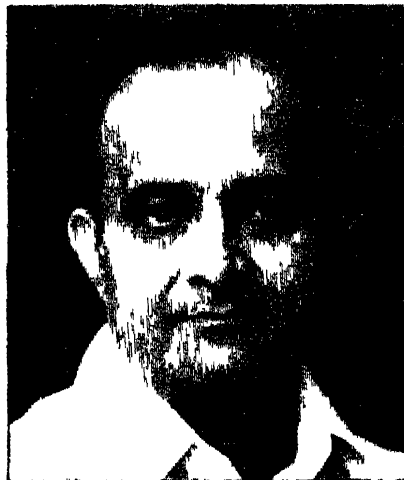
we decided that we shall have nothing to do with the Advanis. With the government. Then Vajpayee and I K. Advani went and in the Prime Minister's immediately visited Vajpayee and released the letter to the press. Vajpayee and I should not have done that, but I issued him that I would not do so in future. But then Advani twice met the same Minister after this. What is more in Maharashtra a unit of the party voted for the Shiv Sena when we had decided in the national executive that we shall have no truck with them. Why this duality? I happened to be in Shimla then and immediately called a press conference and said that the party discipline had been broken by these people. Following this Vajpayee asked me to step down from the national executive of the BJP. I resigned from its primary membership.

Q You were not satisfied with the functioning of the party.

A No. In fact when I had resigned in December 1984 I had said that the style of functioning was absolutely awry, the strategy had gone completely wrong. I have over the years had a say in framing the party policy. We had done so many things in the national executive, so many suggestions were put up but they never saw the light of day. The BJP is a very democratic party, there is full freedom to express yourself and we had done so in the national executive. But the decisions we had taken were simply not implemented. In fact I had told the leadership even before the election that it continued to operate in the way it was, it would be wiped out in the elections, which is what happened.

Q Why has the BJP failed?

A It is a failure of leadership.



Rajinder Puri

There is no accountability, no distribution of responsibility in the party. And despite repeated failures the same old faces continue to hold sway. Take the simple example of Delhi. Till sometime ago the BJP was almost unassailable here. Then it slipped back and kept on slipping but the Delhi leadership of the BJP remained the same. Take another example. A section of the leadership which I call the caucus says at the time of elections that the party should go it alone. But they do not work to go it alone. And when it comes to their own seats they want adjustments. I think it is a shame that the party which has the pretensions of being a national alternative cannot put up enough candidates in Harviana a stone's throw away from Delhi. They are just not acting. I mean today you are up against the Congress(I) computers. You cannot afford to act like a joint family. The

BJP is what I call a paternalistic party not a political organisation. Nobody in the party is accountable and they act like bureaucrats. No doubt it has potential but all of it is negated by the way its leadership acts. One section of the party is at cross purposes with Vajpayee himself. I have told Vajpayee that sorry he has the potential to become Prime Minister but he is destroying his political career by being in the BJP.

Q Which is the section that is at cross purposes with Vajpayee?

A No it is not the RSS. You could call it the Jana Sangh hard core. Vajpayee has become their prisoner. And given the interests of Vajpayee's colleagues they would do better to join the Congress(I) for there is no difference between them (and the Congress I).

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

BUSINESS

FICCI: At the Crossroads

Clashes between prominent business houses take place

One of the objectives listed in the memorandum of association of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is "to encourage friendly feelings and unanimity among the business community and association on all subjects connected with the common good of Indian business. However the latest developments in the country's apex body representing a wide spectrum of industrial and commercial interests, have certainly not complied with this objective. Reports that all was not well with the FICCI had been in circulation for some time, but the approaching 58th annual general meeting brought matters to a head. Prominent industrial groups from all parts of the country were pitted against each other and accusations and charges exchanged. According to insiders in a bid to retain power, prominent industrial houses like the Jais and the Singhas have formed a coterie against the Birla-Modi nexus. Through well manipulated press stories, one group has accused the other of 'orchestrating bogus membership' to increase their voting strength.

Ironically while the issue of 'bogus membership' is valid, all industrial groups whatever their regional hue indulge in this malpractice. If the associate membership list is scanned, the names of the unlikely members such as Taniya Barta Bhandar,

Smoker, India and even one Kant Singh Manch Singh whose address has been noted as Blue Strand Sanjay, Tarpur can be found. What such associations can get out of FICCI is a moot question. Sales tax it is true is a great equaliser and affects the small sellers as much as the manufacturers of scooters. But the FICCI though it boasts of having joint business councils with over 30 countries does not take up matters of direct relevance to associations like the Pan Merchants Association or the Tourist Taxi Operators. In the 1984 annual general meeting resolutions were passed on balancing external payments, the role of trade cost of low productivity, the cost of taxation and finance. The second resolu-

Dr. Bharat Ram



tion did in fact ask for the abolition of sales tax and the extension of bank credit to wholesale traders. Such demands, however, are not the result of the inclusion of such members and would have been made anyway.

Oddly enough in spite of the rigorous denials of the former president of the FICCI K N Modi that "there is absolutely no question of bogus membership" all such entries into FICCI are technically valid. As per the federation's rules "Any chamber of commerce or commercial association, having on its roll not less than 25 members is eligible to become an ordinary member of the federation." Thus it is not difficult to find 25 members as long as there is financial strength. A disgruntled industrialist said, All I have to do is to get 25 of my staff together and form an association and register it. Jit Paul, a prominent industrialist, even claimed that he sent letters to all the members of FICCI and over half of them came back with 'addressee unknown' stamped on the envelopes. However this was an issue that vested interests could pick on and Modi's assurance that the noise in the press is the result of the loss of some individuals in democratically held elections does not ring true. The withdrawal of the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) has left a lot of industrialists perplexed. Of late the IMC which had been a founder member of the FICCI (initially the FICCI had used the IMC premises as its headquarters) had been feeling neglected.

Since the FICCI inception 58 years ago industrialists from the west had always had a major say in the running of the FICCI. Their grip slackened with the defeats of past IMC presidents like S. Hariyu Dattary, Kantakumar Podar and Haribhakti, in elections to the FICCI committee. Resentment built up further with the termination of the past practice of having two consecutive presidents of the FICCI from the east and the west on the grounds of their greater commercial strength, while presidents from the north and the south zones had to make do with one term only. An amendment to the federation's constitution, ended this practice, on the promptings of K N Modi, ensuring that the office of the president would be based on rotation, one year for each region. Aggrieved, the IMC presided by Pratap Bhogilal, sought to bring matters to the notice of the FICCI executive committee.

Desperate attempts were made by Dr. Bharat Ram, one of the senior most members to iron out the differences. Referring lightly to the con-

NEWS

that he said, "the controversy is assuming the proportions of a crack rather than a split." Representing all regional divisions, an eight member peace committee met for discussion at Bharat Ram's residence. Present at the deliberations were S K Birla, K N Modi, H S Singhania, Lala Bansi Dhar, Pravinchandra Gandhi, Madan Mohan Mangaldas M V Arunachalam and D C Kothari.

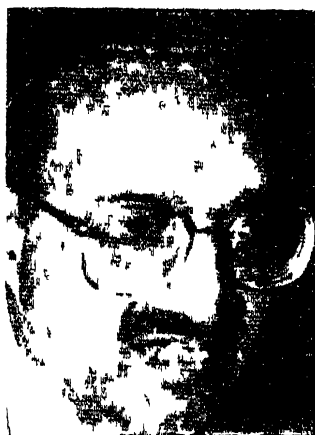
Paradoxically, both Hari Shankar Singhania and Ashok Jain who are rooting for the west zone, technically came to represent the east zone as the committee decided that the area where the income tax return is filed from constitutes the base of the industrialist. While Bharat Ram placated feelings and assured the IMC that consensus agreements would prevail in the future, the subsequent withdrawal of the IMC nipped these gestures in the bud. It was apparent that the crack had become a chasm when Pratap Bhogilai in a statement

filed feelings. Some amendments, subject to the approval of the AGM, include a consecutive three year standing membership of any chamber, an increase in the membership of the chamber from 25 to 75 members, an increase in the subscription fee from Rs 3,500 to roughly Rs 7,000 and a thorough scrutiny of all chambers of commerce by a reputed firm of chartered accountants. There are rumours that a cut off date for the implementation of these amendments may be taken retrospectively from February 1982.

While the discontent may be outwardly assuaged by these measures, internal power politics is still at work. Ashok Jain reportedly used the discontent of the south and the west to extend his base in the organisation. While much of the IMC's action has been attributed to the support Jain commands in the west, his support from the south was negligible. According to the principle of

unexpected move the south scotched all rumours of a Birla-Modi caucus confronting them and strongly denied the idea of setting up a rival federation. Issuing a statement, the FICCI consultative committee of Madras said, "Certain newspapers are controlled by some leading industrial houses. Is it proper that they should use these papers to denigrate a body, like the FICCI. Indeed, it plainly indicted Ashok Jain, from keeping more than 80 applications submitted from the south pending, to prevent them from voting in the 1984 elections. It was only after a year lapse that the membership was admitted.

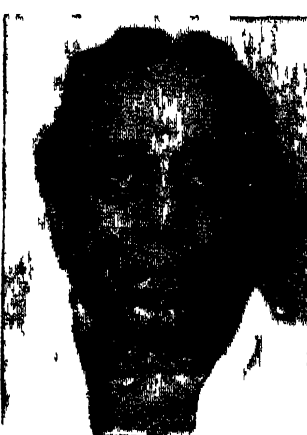
Insiders concur that it was during Ashok Jain's presidency, (1984-85), that membership increased rapidly. From 850 ordinary members in 1982, the figure had escalated to 1700 in 1983, with more than 600 members becoming members in 1983-84. Incredibly, Maharashtra, the



Ashok Jain



S K Birla



R P Goenka



K N Modi

said no useful purpose would be served by continuing the association with the FICCI. Significantly both R K Bajaj and D N Patodia, president and vice president of the FICCI respectively, were not asked to attend the democratisation of FICCI meeting. The detractors of FICCI feel that their omission was yet another sign of the dilution of the hold of the west.

Nevertheless, opponents feel that the very fact that the annual general meeting is proceeding as scheduled, shows that the withdrawal of IMC is not a very serious matter. Especially in view of the fact that the IMC has only withdrawn four of its nominees—Viren Shah, S C Chokhani, Rashesh Mafatlal and Cyrus Garder—from the forthcoming elections and not given a *carte blanche* to all its 600 members to leave the FICCI. Moreover, amendments to the constitution are already in the offing and will serve to placate

irritation. It was the turn of a south Indian industrialist to be vice president. Indeed the name of Deepak Bakshi was being mentioned in his connection. However, keeping in mind the prestigious International Chambers of Commerce (ICC) to be held in Delhi in 1985—(an honour a year as ICC will be in India after a gap of 23 years—the south zone stood its ground and supported the name of R P Goenka. To add to their claim of personal animosity, it has been claimed that K N Modi as vice president of the Indian national committee of the ICC is tipped to be the president of the ICC during its meeting in India. It is a selection that would please the eastern industrial interests as they will already have Goenka as the president of FICCI, at that time.

Strangely enough, Ashok Jain used the choice of Goenka as vice president to activate the claims of the south on the FICCI. But in an

acclaimed centre of commerce in 1984, accounted to 281 members together with Gujarat, while Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu totalled a membership of 139, Uttar Pradesh in the same period, totalled a figure of 229 members. Resentment was accentuated with the election of Jain's 20 year old son to the executive committee and later on the subsequent defeat of K K Birla's son-in-law in the elections to the same body.

It is unfortunate that a premier organisation like the FICCI, has fallen prey to power politics. Suraj Paul's recent scathing comment that "the members who have grown in niche but have not developed" may actually hold true. But if India is to take that well publicised leap forward into the 21st century, it would be advisable for such organisations like the federation, to end their feudal bickerings for power.

Mehla Chandra, New Delhi

Minus Admen

The clarion call, alas, was only a short note—as far as the festival of India in the United States is concerned. Tara Sinha, the wonder girl of advertising, had bagged the festival account for Clarion's, but when she and the company decided to part, the festival authorities decided that they could neither continue with the solitary Sinha, nor did they quite want Clarion without Sinha. Result: the festival authorities will handle their own publicity

A Beauty None Can Miss



Sonu Walia

Journalism's loss has been the fashion world's gain. Twentyone-year-old Sonu Walia's preference for the ramp to the typewriter has finally paid off: the young fashion model was recently crowned Miss India at a glittering evening sponsored by *Femina* at Bombay's Shanmukhanda Hall. It was the end of a swift climb to the top: she began participating in beauty contests in 1981, later became Miss Delhi and Miss Jaipur and the runner-up in the Miss Bombay pageant last year. This time, however, opinions concurred: an impressive panel of judges, including Swaroop Sampat, Shashi Kapoor and Moon Moon Sen unanimously found her the most scintillating of a row of beauties.



Ameena Ahuja at work

Poetic Lines

In Moscow, Tokyo, New York and Caracas she is known as the 'woman who paints sounds.' Ameena

Ahuja, artist and linguist par excellence, has just concluded another successful exhibition of her calligraphic paintings in New Delhi. Interweaving

poetry and line, Ameena forms lyrical but quietly powerful calligraphic images of birds and animals from the verses of Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz. "Sounds must be seen, colours must be heard" is the Sanskrit verse she quotes to define her work. A Ph.D in philology, Ameena was taught the scripts by her father, the late Nuruddin Ahmed "but it was my English mother who made me aware of the pictorial beauty of the letter. Calligraphy gives me the best line and any alphabet can be moulded into forms." A portfolio of Ameena's bird and animal paintings, with an accompanying text in English for lesser mortals who speak only one language, is due to be published by Hind Pocket Books later this year

Urdu, Persian, English, Hindi, Russian, French and Spanish come easily to Ameena and the reed 'kalam' is as fluently handled, too.

Royalty Snaps it Up

If anyone had doubts about the special pri-

vileges scions of royal families enjoy even today, our young Prime Minister has dispelled them. After receiving several requests for photography sessions

the first one Mr Rajiv Gandhi granted was to the first cousin of Queen Elizabeth, the fifth Earl of Lichfield, Thomas Patrick Anson.

The Earl had an exclusive 29-minute session with the Prime Minister and later accompanied him on a visit to Dhanbad. How did it feel to fly thousands of miles for a few photographs? Said Lichfield after the session: "It was a pleasant assignment. I could click in and out of the wide verandah of the Prime Minister's new residence which provided an excellent locale for photography." Mr Rajiv Gandhi's photographs will be yet another feather in his already colourful cap. He has had a book published on those whom he considers the world's most beautiful women—Brooke Shields, Indian model Persis Khambatta and, surprise of surprises, Princess Anne.



Lord Lichfield

BEGINNING 2 JUNE 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a very lucky week for creative artists and writers. Businessmen and those employed in the private sector will also find this week rewarding. Your financial front looks bright but do not be extravagant. At home your wife and children will be a source of inspiration. A journey you were looking forward to is in the offing. However, keep a vigilant eye on your health and diet.

Good dates: 5, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) If you are unemployed and looking for a job, there are bright chances that you will find one this week. Professionals will be confronted with better opportunities. But businessmen will find the going slow. Your financial prospects are not too bad. At home you will be called upon to shoulder additional responsibilities. But avoid arguments and tiffs with your beloved. Watch your health.

Good dates: 4, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Social engagements and parties will keep you busy this week. A new friendship which will blossom will be of immense help to you in future. The period is not too good for professionals. Deal with those in authority with tact. Businessmen should be wary of deception. Your health will add to your worries this week. However, this is a good phase for love and marriage negotiations.

Good dates: 2, 3 and 4
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Success on all fronts is a certainty for you this week. Sportsmen and artists will make steady progress. Businessmen will bag lucrative deals. Those in profession can expect a promotion. Some of you will be posted to a place of your liking. Lovers will also find this period favourable. Your health will improve. Watch out for a pleasant surprise towards the end of the week.

Good dates: 2, 3 and 5
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is a lucky week for singers and performing artists. Rare honours are in store for some of them. If you have plans to change your career, do so only after consulting your well-wishers. Businessmen are advised to put away expansion plans. Financially, this is a bleak period, but your friends will come to your rescue. Those above 50 should be careful about their health and diet.

Good dates: 3, 4 and 6
Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Lawyers and politicians will prosper during this phase. Do not hesitate to take up challenging assignments. Professionals will be rewarded for their dedication. The financial front looks promising and some of you may even inherit property. On the domestic front, a misunderstanding will come to an end. But those above the age of 45 should keep a vigilant eye on their health.

Good dates: 4, 5 and 7
Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) A job is in the offing for those of you who are unemployed. The phase is also favourable for professionals and businessmen. Do not waste time on socialising and push your efforts to the utmost. Students should not fritter away precious time. The financial front is not very promising. Speculative ventures will not yield favourable results. Take care of your health and diet.

Good dates: 6, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is not a favourable phase for lovers. A misunderstanding may lead to estrangement. At home, one of your close relatives may suddenly fall sick, adding to your worries. Your own health will also bother you. However, financial gains are in store for some of you. The professional front will remain inspiring. A pleasure trip you were looking forward to is in the offing.

Good dates: 2, 4 and 6
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: South-east



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) If you have legal problems, this is the ideal time to solve them. The time is also good for lovers. You can go ahead with marriage plans. At home, your children will be a source of joy. A letter towards the end of the week will bring unexpected good news. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. But do not neglect your health and avoid spicy food.

Good dates: 4, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Students will come out with flying colours in the competitions ahead. Sportsmen and artists will also prosper during this period. This is also a lucky period for professionals and businessmen. Make use of all the opportunities that come your way. However, this is not a good period for love and marriage negotiations. Keep a sharp eye on your health and avoid spicy food.

Good dates: 2, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: East



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is an extremely lucky week for lovers. You can go ahead with marriage plans. Students are advised to be more serious about their career. Professionals, especially those in the government service, should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Businessmen should check all documents meticulously before signing them. Your health will add to your worries this week.

Good dates: 3, 6 and 7
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (15 March—14 April) If you have plans to start a new business, this is the right time to do so. However, professionals will face opposition from their colleagues. A letter from a long lost friend will give you a lot of joy. You will have to postpone pleasure trips. This is not a good week for love and marriage. The home front will cause concern. Your deteriorating health will add to your worries this week.

Good dates: 4, 5 and 9
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South-west

For those born between 15 April and 14 May

You are cheerful and optimistic by nature. You are also endowed with an adventurous spirit and you will do well if you join politics or the administrative services. You do not rely on fate and you believe that man is the creator of his own destiny. However, you lose your composure and tend to behave irrationally when you are angry. Most of you are blessed with good health but you occasionally suffer from headaches. Women born during this period are generally haughty but they make good housewives.

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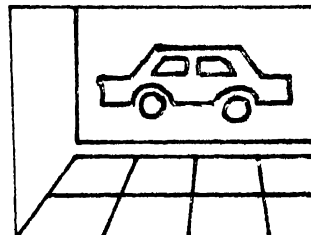
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SAASPF7A 2

VARIETY/SCIENCE

Helping them "Catch up"

Bristol University's School of Education in England has devised a computer programme that helps deaf children read from an early age. Known as Catch Up, the system consists of a concept keyboard pad, a BBC computer and VDU and a print-out unit. Symbols similar to the Egyptian hieroglyphics representing nouns, verbs, etc., are stored in the computer memory. The child places an illustrated sheet on top of the concept keyboard and places a finger on the drawing of the object in which it is interested, for example, a car. The symbol of a car then appears on the VDU screen. Later the word "car" is added and by association of symbols with words, the child learns to read.



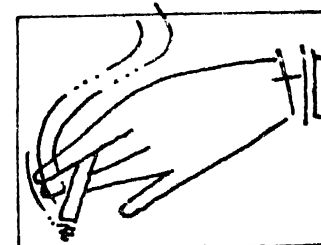
Progressing from simple symbols, which can be animated to indicate motion—eg, a man running to indicate the present tense of the verb to run—the child uses a question and answer sheet to form short sentences. Eventually it can compose short stories, based on symbols chosen from an illustrated sheet, and obtain a print-out. Corrections can also be made by the child. Catch Up is being tried on children from the age of three-and-a-half years.

Combating Sleeping Sickness

Glasgow University in Scotland is launching a three-year project in Mbaraka, Kenya, on how to make more effective drugs to combat the dreaded sleeping sickness disease prevalent in African cattle. The present drugs, which have been available for around 20 years, give from two to six months' protection. Over the next three years professors Peter Holmes and George Urquhart of Glasgow University's Veterinary School will investigate the factors which affect the efficiency of the drug treatments currently available.

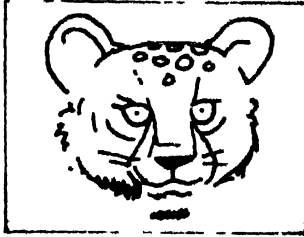
Cancerous Addiction

Women who started smoking during the Second World War are being treated in increasing numbers for a chronic lung disease that has now been linked to cancer. According to Dr Dorothy Sexton of the Yale University School of Nursing in Los Angeles, a study of 112 women compared those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to healthy women who did not smoke. The results revealed that victims of the disease were more restricted in activity, suffered from loneliness and depression and felt ill more often. Emphysema, a distension of the lung with breathing difficulties and chronic bronchitis are the most frequently diagnosed forms of the disease, the most common chronic lung disease in the United States. Such an ailment can develop also after long exposure to environmental and occupational pollutants.



A Threat to the Cat Family

An international research team has exposed a threat to the cat family. In a paper entitled "Genetic basis for species vulnerability in the cheetah" the team infers that the animal is at risk from being naturally a highly inbred species. The investigation began when a thriving colony of cheetahs at a safari park in Oregon in the United States were almost wiped out by an infection. 18 died. Yet the same virus borne disease occurs in domestic cats with a mortality rate lower than one per cent and the level of deaths occurs mainly among animals already in poor health.



Since no member of the 37 species of the cat family with the exception of the domestic tabby is completely free from the threat of extinction it is particularly important to be able to breed in captivity. The paper says that cheetahs, which are restricted in the wild to the eastern and southern parts of Africa, must have experienced a serious decline in numbers at some point in the past and a subsequent period of enforced inbreeding occurred.

Today cheetahs face two dangers arising from such inbreeding. First there is an accumulation of harmful traits including various reproductive abnormalities. For example the cheetah's sperm is often more defective than the average tomcat. Genetic defects are also reflected in a high death rate among young animals and that is observed in both captive and wild populations.

Varying Shades of Hypnosis

Dr Walter Bongartz, a psychologist in Konstanz University, West Germany, has disputed certain claims and beliefs about hypnosis. He says that under hypnosis people are fully conscious, they are well aware of what they are doing and they are not in a trance, as is generally imagined. They are also unlikely to develop superhuman powers. The hypnotist cannot order them to do anything against the will. In experiments that he has conducted, he has found that people cannot be improved under hypnosis, since individual perception of the outside world can be changed.

Under hypnosis people can come to terms with certain contradictions, as the following comparison indicates. When people are told under hypnosis that there is no furniture in a room they will walk very carefully round where a table might stand. People who are not hypnotised will stumble against the chair and table, because they cannot see it, but because they imagine that such a behaviour is expected of them. One spectacular case was that of a woman who was abducted and raped. Under hypnosis she was able to recall details that led to the arrest of her kidnappers.

Moreover, Hypnosis has several uses. It can be put to good use in medicine as a painkiller. An American experiment involving 49 children and juveniles has shown that hypnosis can be used in painful treatment of the backbone and bonemarrow, both to combat fear of treatment and to reduce perceived pain. Hypnosis is occasionally used in German hospitals. In Bochum, for instance, it is used to persuade a partially paralysed patient to leave his wheelchair after an operation, even though getting up may cause him pain.

Headache?



The one solution

ANACIN

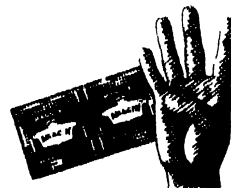
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THIS INDIA



PANAJI: A bridegroom who was to undergo a religious marriage—having earlier undergone civil marriage—was, until the time of writing, found perched atop a tree for five days. The man, Mr. Shanu Gawade of Bobnag village in Ponda taluka, was to marry a bride from Mardol. On 23 April, when the bridegroom did not turn up at the appointed time, the bridal party went to his village. They were informed that the bridegroom had disappeared that very morning. Subsequently he was traced to a tree-top. The villagers said he had been possessed by a local spirit called "Devachar"—*The Hindustan Times* (B. B. L. Sharma, New Delhi)

NAGPUR: An attempt by municipal commissioner B. N. Makhija to "please" the newly elected members of the Nagpur corporation by giving them a present, backfired. Makhija arranged to present a rexin bag costing about Rs 30 to each of the 75 members. But the members were furious at such a niggardly present. At the special general body meeting on 10 May, BJP member Prabhakar Lende and others said the commissioner slighted them by presenting a bag "worse than the one carried by a *patwari*". The member returned the present to Makhija—*Free Press Journal* (I. Soundararajan, Dombivli)

MADRAS: Does the display of pictures and images of gods and goddesses and religious symbols in research laboratories go against the grain of secularism? It does, in the view of a major national laboratory in Madras. The Central Leather Research Institute, Adyar, has frowned on such displays in its work places and rooms, and has asked its employees to desist from the practice. The space made available as

a sequel to compliance with this instruction can be "used more usefully for displaying authorised information/data/results/achievements of the institute, in a manner which is presentable, appropriate, and beneficial for the approved policies/programmes of the institute," the workers in CLRI have been told in a circular—*The Hindu* (Savithri Viswanathan, New Delhi)

ALLAHABAD: Advocates of the Allahabad High Court went on strike on 9 May to protest against the non-supply of drinking water to advocates and the litigant public. The decision to go on strike was taken at an emergency general meeting of the High Court bar association. The meeting noted that for the last four days, there was not a drop of water in the premises where the bar association is located. In a resolution, the association said it was "humanly impossible" to work in such conditions. The members had therefore, decided to abstain from attending courts from 9 May —*The Times of India* (A.K. Guha, Bettiah)

GIRIDIH: A bridegroom in his nuptial attire landed up in police custody instead of solemnising the wedding rituals. It happened at a place here on 1 May, when the bridegroom fell prey to one of the seven deadly sins of greed and became rigid on getting a scooter as his dowry. Police sources said that when his in-laws failed to meet his demand, the groom started damaging the *puja* pandal and throwing away everything. When the police were informed, the youth was immediately arrested and sent to jail—*Searchlight* (M. S. Rizvi, Aurangabad)

BOMBAY: A 32-year-old man, who can look at the blazing sun for five to eight minutes without blinking, is looking for someone who can explain to him his unusual power, reports UNI. Ramesh Sanjanani was lying on the terrace of his home at Gibraltar in 1977 when he first found himself gazing unconsciously at the sun. "It was an exhilarating experience. I did it randomly at first, then consciously and more often," he says. —*The Statesman* (Arun Gupta, Calcutta)

JUNAGADH: "May God give MLAs good understanding" was the message carried by about 182 gas balloons released here on 21 April as part of the current anti-reservation stir. Hundreds of people watched as the balloons carrying slips of paper bearing the message were released by members of a local student union—*The Times of India* (Anjali Khare, Charbagh)

WITHOUT COMMENT

We do not compromise our position in return for anything—Rajiv Gandhi during a press conference in Moscow

To be a good subordinate one must learn to anticipate the boss's orders—Pranab Mukherjee, in *Illustrated Weekly of India*



The pulse of life beats and will continue to beat in Calcutta which has been neglected before and after independence by the respective governments (at the centre)—West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu

If only a few more Albanias would emerge, the whole international order would collapse—Ranjan Gupta in *Gentleman*

I am not a military dictator...People asked me to come and take over the country—Gen H.M. Ershad of Bangladesh in *India Today*

If all the Sikhs who heard or had in their possession tapes extolling the assassins of Mrs Gandhi and photographs of Bhindranwale were to be arrested, then the government would have to arrest thousands, even millions—Khushwant Singh in *Parliament*

Nobody really knows who is doing what (in Calcutta University)—Santosh Kumar Bhattacharya, vice-chancellor of Calcutta University

My idea of a really good workout is lying down—Hollywood actress Glenda Jackson

VARIETY

CHESS

The women's world championship passed off, as it often does, virtually unnoticed outside the Soviet Union. Maia Chiburdanidze retained the title, defeating her challenger Irina Levitina 8-5. In some sense the match contained more thrills and spills than its male counterpart. Certainly neither player displayed much in the way of Karpovian restraint, but play was at times a little scrappy.

The turning point seemed to come in game nine, when Levitina leading 4½-3½, missed the chance to extend her lead in a game full of ideas but lacking precision.

White: I. Levitina. Black: M. Chiburdanidze. Queen's Indian Defence. Game 9.

1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 N-KB3 P-K3
3 P-KN3 P-QN3 4 B-N2 B-N2
5 P-B4 B-K2 6 B-N3 O-O

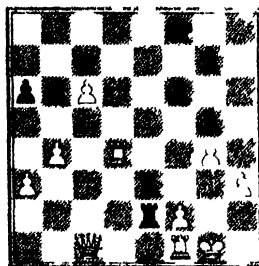
Safer here is N-K5

7 P-Q5 B-N5 8 B-Q2

A trifle tame. 8 O-O is much more in the spirit of the previous move.

8 P-B3! 9 PxBP PxP
10 Q-B2 P-B4 11 O-O Q-K2

Chiburdanidze (Black)



Levitina (White) to move

12 P-N3 N-B3 13 P-QR3 B-R4
14 B-N5 BxN 15 QxB KR-Q1
16 KR-Q1 P-KR3 17 B-B4

Admittedly after 17 BxN QxB 18 QxQ PxQ White has very little, but the bishop is not at all well placed here.

17 N-K5 18 Q-N2 P-B3
19 Q-B2 N-N4 20 BxN HPxB
21 P-R3 N-Q5 22 NxN f xN
23 BxB QxB 24 R-Qd3 1 K4

Black now holds a clear positional advantage based on the superiority of her pawn centre to White's queenside majority, but the game starts to meander unconvincingly.

25 QR-Q1 K-B2 26 P-KN4 R-R1
27 R-N3 QH-Q1 28 P-K3 KR-K1
29 P-N4 R-K3 30 PxP PxP
31 R(N) Q3 R(1)-K1 32 Q-B1 R-K7
33 P-B5 K-B1 34 P-B6 Q-B2
35 R-B1

Black was threatening J5 R x P 36 K x R
Q P7+

35 P-QR3 36 R x P R(1)-K6

Looks strong, but in fact White is winning by force.

DIAGRAM

37 R-Q6 1 Q x R 38 P x R?

Missing the point of her own play 38 P-B1 and B-B1 Q-B1 39 P x R or 38 R-N6 39 K-B2!

38 Q-B2 39 R-B4 P x R
40 P x f R-K3 41 Resigns

BRIDGE

It is the nature of things, I suppose, that the bad hands make the news. Israel was leading the 27 odd teams in its half of the field in the Olympiad when various misadventures occurred on this deal against Canada.

Dealer North Game all

♠ K J 8 6
♥ J 9 3
♦ 3 2
♣ Q J 9 2
N
♠ 10 2
♥ Q 8
♦ 10 9 7 4
♣ A 10 8 7 4
W
♠ A 7 4
♥ A 4
♦ A J 8 6 5
♣ K 6 5
S
♠ Q 9 5 3
♥ K 10 7 6 5 2
♦ K Q
♣ 3
E

This was the bidding when Israel was North South.

South Berger	West Mittelman	North Meiri	East Graves
1NT	2♥	double(1)	redouble
3♦	No	3NT	double(2)
No	No	No	

(1) Such doubles are often played nowadays to show general strength.
(2) To confirm that he would welcome a

heart lead.

The declarer gained a trick when the 9 of hearts was covered by the queen and ace. He was to play a club next, and it looks to be a bit awkward for West. However, the contract was one down. But the result was nothing compared to what happened at the other table.

West Lorraine	North Graves	East Fucik
2♥	double	2♠
No	double	all pass

This went for 1100. The Two Heart overcall was supposed to be playable in both hands.

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- The Sahara is the world's largest desert. Name the second largest desert in the world?
- In Tibet it is called the Sengge, what is it called in India?
- Apart from the Sun, name the star nearest to the earth?
- The Veddahs are inhabitants of which country?
- How is the *lycopersicon esculentum* a garden vegetable, better known as?
- The first Winter Olympic Games were held in 1925. Where?
- In medicine, what is gingivitis?
- In which year was the first hydrogen bomb exploded?

- The Molotov cocktail, a home-made bomb was first used against the invading Russian armies during World War II by soldiers of which country?
- In meteorology, what is a nickel sun?
- How is the 16th century Italian painter Jacopo Robusti better known?
- What do the following have in common: *Batillus*, *Esau*, *Atlantic*, *Nissim*, *Maru*, *Globtik*, *London* and *Burmah*?
- Name the metal found in the largest quantities in the earth's crust?
- What do the initials ICAO stand for?

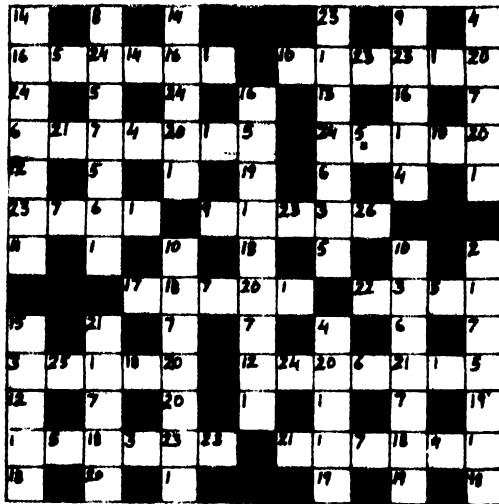
14 International Civil Aviation Organisation

- The Australian desert
- India
- The Proxima Centauri
- Sri Lanka
- The tomato
- Chamomile in France
- The inflation of the USSR
- 1952 in November
- Finland
- The refraction of bright light from ice crystals in cirrus and cirrostratus clouds
- Tintoretto
- They are some of the largest oil tankers in the world
- Aluminium

ANSWERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
E												K
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
								L				

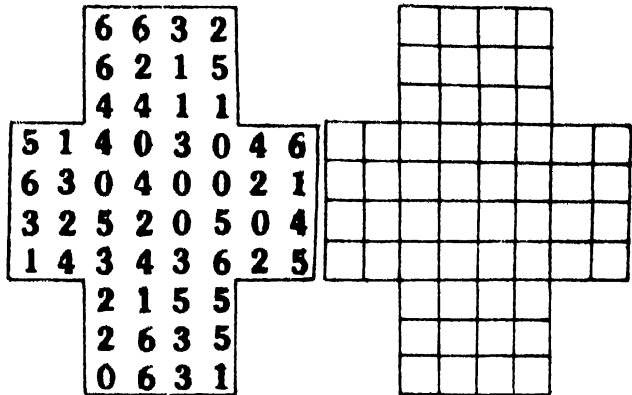
Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always represents the same letter. Three letters have been given to help you make a start. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Figure it Out

R	A	H	I	R	S
V	O	A	N	N	I
M	I	A	A	N	V
N	G	R	S	A	I
A	D	V	H	T	R
J	I	R	A	J	P

Starting at each of the four corners in turn, and proceeding from one letter to the next in any direction, can you figure out the names of four boys. Each letter can be used only once.

Witsharpener



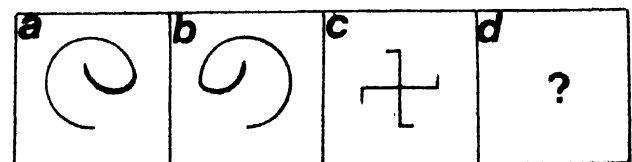
A set of 28 dominoes (0:0 to 6:6) have been arranged to give the number pattern shown above. Can you work out through logical means how the dominoes pieces lie to give this pattern? You may find it easier to use the grid given alongside.

Word Power

SLUG	[]	FOWL
GOAT	[]	SOAR
WISH	[]	WAIT
LARD	[]	TART
DATE	[]	DARN
BADE	[]	PORE

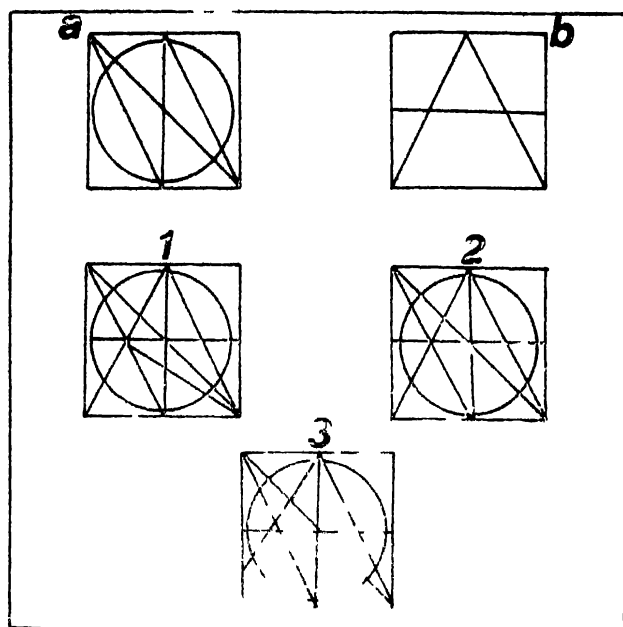
Fit a letter into the brackets given above so that the words to the left and right of the brackets change to other words. The letter in the bracket replaces the third letter in each word. When complete, the letters in the brackets read downwards will spell out another word. Can you say what this word is?

Mindbender



Draw a diagram in column D so that A is to B as C is to D.

Shape Sleuth

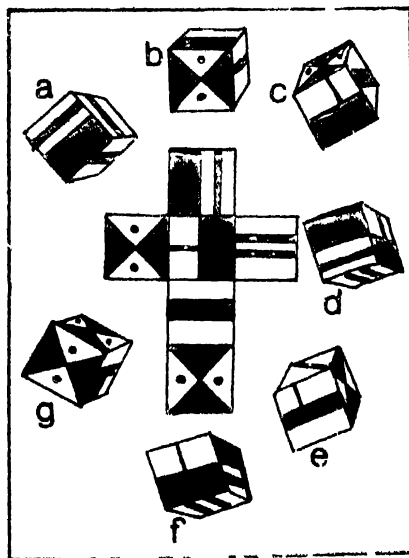


Which of the following cities have hosted Olympics twice?

Quick Think

Can you find a number which is born to the same mother at the same time and place but not to me?

Shape Sleuth



If you fold the flat 'net' into a box, which of the boxes, a, b, c, d, e, f or g would you get?

Quizbizz

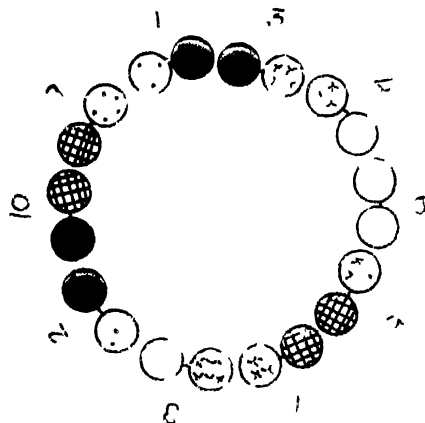
Which of the following cities have hosted Olympics twice

- 1 Moscow
- 2 Tokyo
- 3 Los Angeles
- 4 Paris
- 5 London

Solutions to last week's Teasers

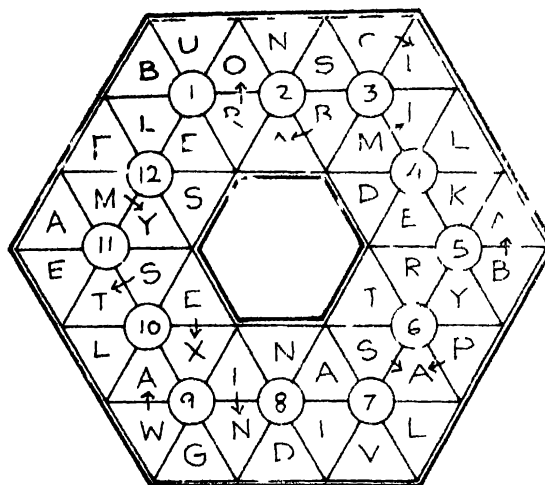
Figure it Out: AARDWOLF, EEL, HAWK, LAMA, and OONT could be the answers but there could be others

Wit Sharpener



Quick Think: AB = 8 cm. AB is a diagonal of the rectangle. The other diagonal is equal to the radius of the circle.

Word Play



Mind Bender: 1—g, e, 2—d, f, 3—a, c, 4—b, h

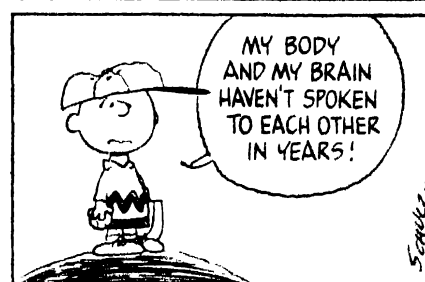
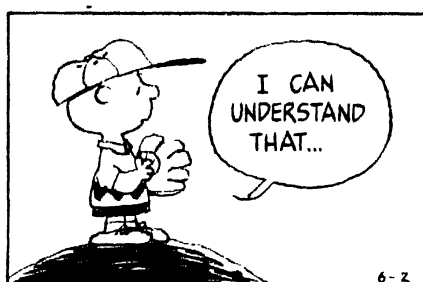
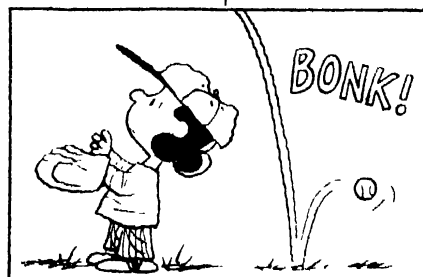
Everybody: 10¹⁰ = 2³³ = 5²⁰ = 1,000,000,000,000,000,000

What's in a Word: Positive

Missing Link: Hijack

PEANUTS

featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ



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2 years and above but less than 3 years	9%
3 years and above but less than 5 years	10%
5 years and above	11%



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Mandakini revealing

Jayar la L a.

Is someone jealous of Anita Raaj's success? The industry was rife with rumours that she was going to marry a sheikh from Saudi Arabia, give up films and settle down in Jeddah. This was something which Anita herself denied. "How can I be so irresponsible? There are so many films I am working in. There are crores of rupees involved and besides there are the careers of so many men and women involved. How can I just give up so much that this industry has given me and go away? And moreover where is the millionaire Arab? I have not even seen him. I don't know why people are in such a hurry to

see me married. It must be the handiwork of someone who is not happy about my success," Anita says.

The hottest topic of discussion in the industry is some hot scenes that will hit the screen soon. Everyone is talking about the grand exposure of *Mandakini* and of how *Raj Kapoor* has exposed her anatomy. They are talking about the shapely figure of *Dimple Kapadia* and the longest kiss she pictured with *Rishi Kapoor*; it was a kiss which took 234 takes. They are talking about *Rekha* and her bathing scene in *Shashi Kapoor's Utsav*. The question is how will the censors react?

Kumar Gaurav's career appears to be taking a nosedive. The only film he has in hand at the moment is *Naam*, which is being produced by his father *Rajendra Kumar*, and directed by *Mahesh Bhatt*. The astrologers had pre-

dicted that Gaurav's wife, *Namrata*, would bring him luck after marriage. But nothing like that seems to be happening. Those who are superstitious believe that it is the curse of *Vijayeta Pandit* that is wreaking havoc.



Anita Raaj no wedding bells

ayenia 01

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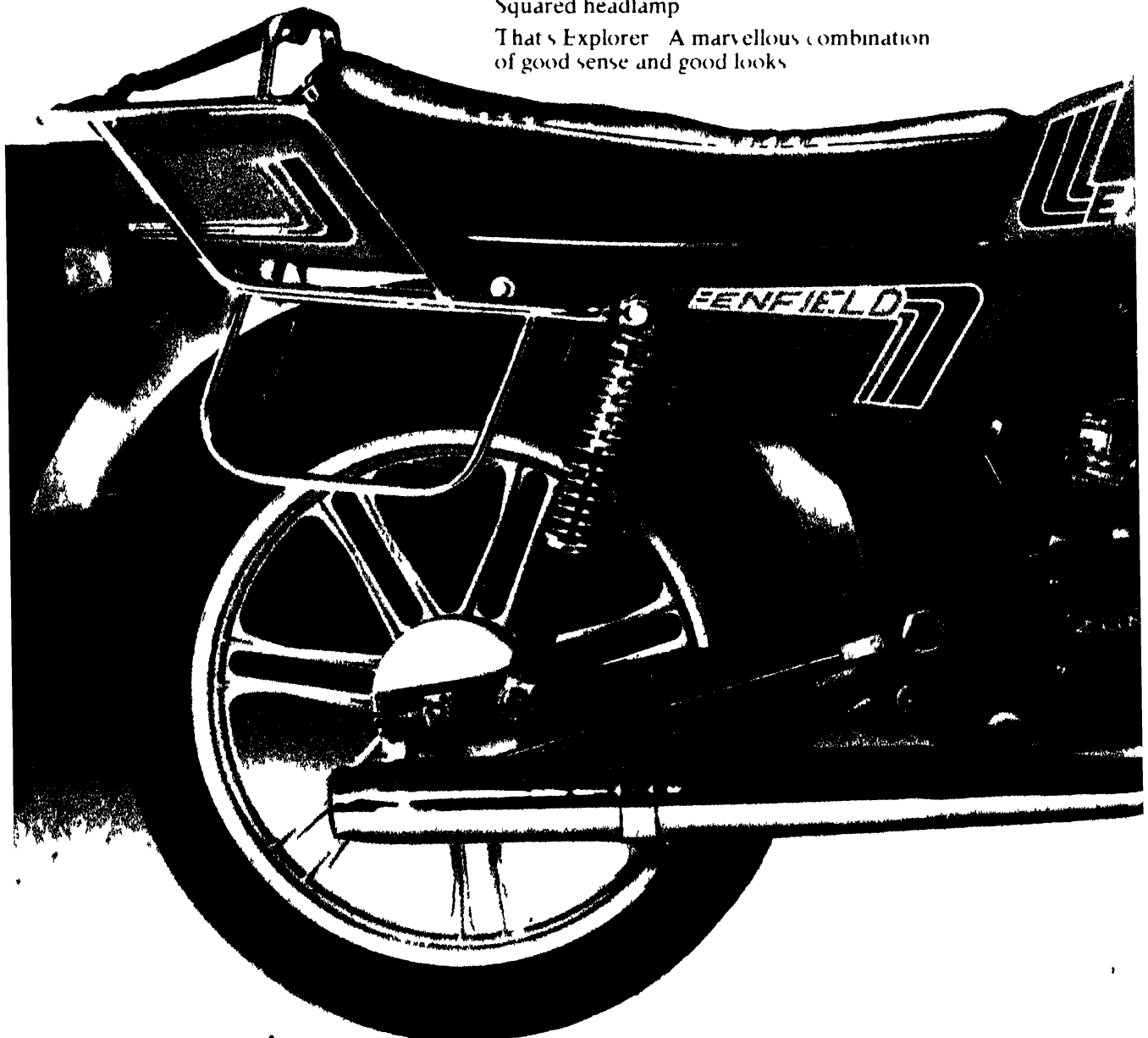
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ENFIELD

DELHI DIARY

Reliance, Sans Textiles?

Sunday's report on Reliance Textile Industries which appeared in our 10/16 March issue, seems to be borne out by the latest annual report of the company. To begin with the cover illustration of the well produced glossy publication is that of a petrochemical complex with the legend, 'Reliance Diversification into petrochemicals'. The annual report lists the new projects cleared by the government in the past one year for polyester staple fibre, purified terephthalic acid (PTA), mono ethylene glycol (MEG) and linear alkyl benzene (LAB). SUNDAY reported that the company may



Dhirubhai Ambani

drop the word 'textiles' from its name. The annual report says "your com-

pany is proposing to change its present name to Reliance Industries Ltd

signifying its entry into the field of petrochemical and other capital intensive industries of importance to the national economy." The company proposes to pass a resolution (apparently in the national interest) for changing its name in its next annual general meeting. Incidentally, while Reliance is expanding its chairman, Dhirubhai Ambani is not its highest paid executive. Recognising the fact that running around in the corridors of power in Delhi is of prime importance, Reliance's Delhi representative V. Balasubramanian, is given a salary higher than that received by Ambani.

Khalistan's Kashmir Link

A Kashmiri is active in the Khalistan movement. No, he is not a member of the Kashmir Liberation Front (KLF). He is a Kashmiri Pandit Pyare Shivpuri, who is often seen at Khalistan House on 12, Talbort Road, London. Shivpuri is said to have been imprisoned during the Emergency in India.

Being a Kashmiri Pandit he claims to be a relative of many Indian VIPs. Jagjit Singh Chauhan's headquarters is Khalistan House and the clandestine radio station, Voice of Khalistan, is also based in this office on Talbort Road. What is Shivpuri's interest in the Khalistan movement? This question may seem redundant especially when the fact is considered that when Jagjit Singh Chauhan organised a pro-Khalistan conference in London in early April, elements like Phizo of Nagaland and the KLF activists joined in. Have the Indian intelligence services tried to verify his antecedents?

Menaka's Western Quest

Nothing has been heard about the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch leader, Menaka Gandhi, since she lost the Amethi elections in December. She was seen briefly at a tea reception hosted by the Janata Party president, Chandra Shekhar, after the Karnataka elections but she went into oblivion again after that. Menaka Gandhi is now planning a trip to the USA. After all if

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi can visit the west this summer, why can't his estranged sister-in-law? Menaka Gandhi's friends have been spreading stories about her plans to meet Benazir Bhutto in London, to exchange notes about their respective political ambitions. While Benazir Bhutto may be popular for Menaka Gandhi, popular political support seems to be a far cry.



Menaka Gandhi

Forceless Guards

The recent spurt in terrorist activity in north India which shook the capital as well, has all of a sudden started off a chain of stories in the media about the possibilities of a specialised force called the National Guards being set up to undertake anti-terrorist activities. The fact is that an organisation called the National Guards has been in existence for the past year and a half. It has a headquarters setup, but no constabulary. An Andhra Pradesh cadre IPS officer, R T Nagraji, has been the director general of the National Guards since last year and a Gujarat cadre's inspector general of police, K. Dadabhai, has been assisting Nagraji in his work. There are some junior officers attached to the DGP and the IGP, but no force has been set up so far. Will someone look into the reasons for the delay in setting up the National Guards?

D. E. Nizamuddin

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PM in America: The Terms of Endearment

SUNDAY



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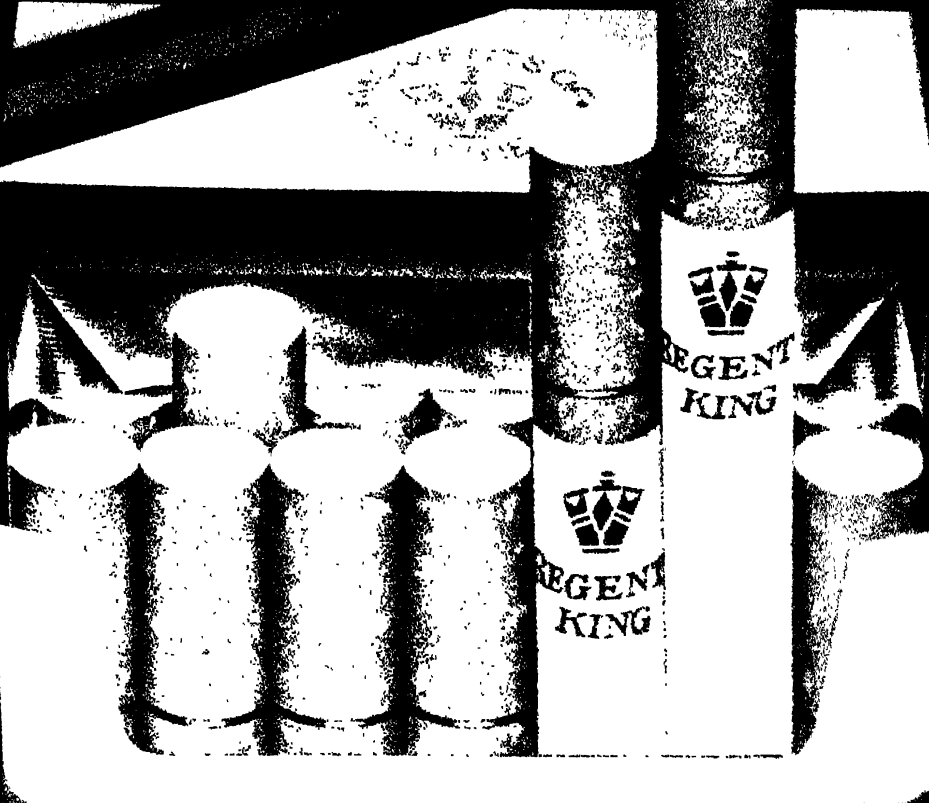
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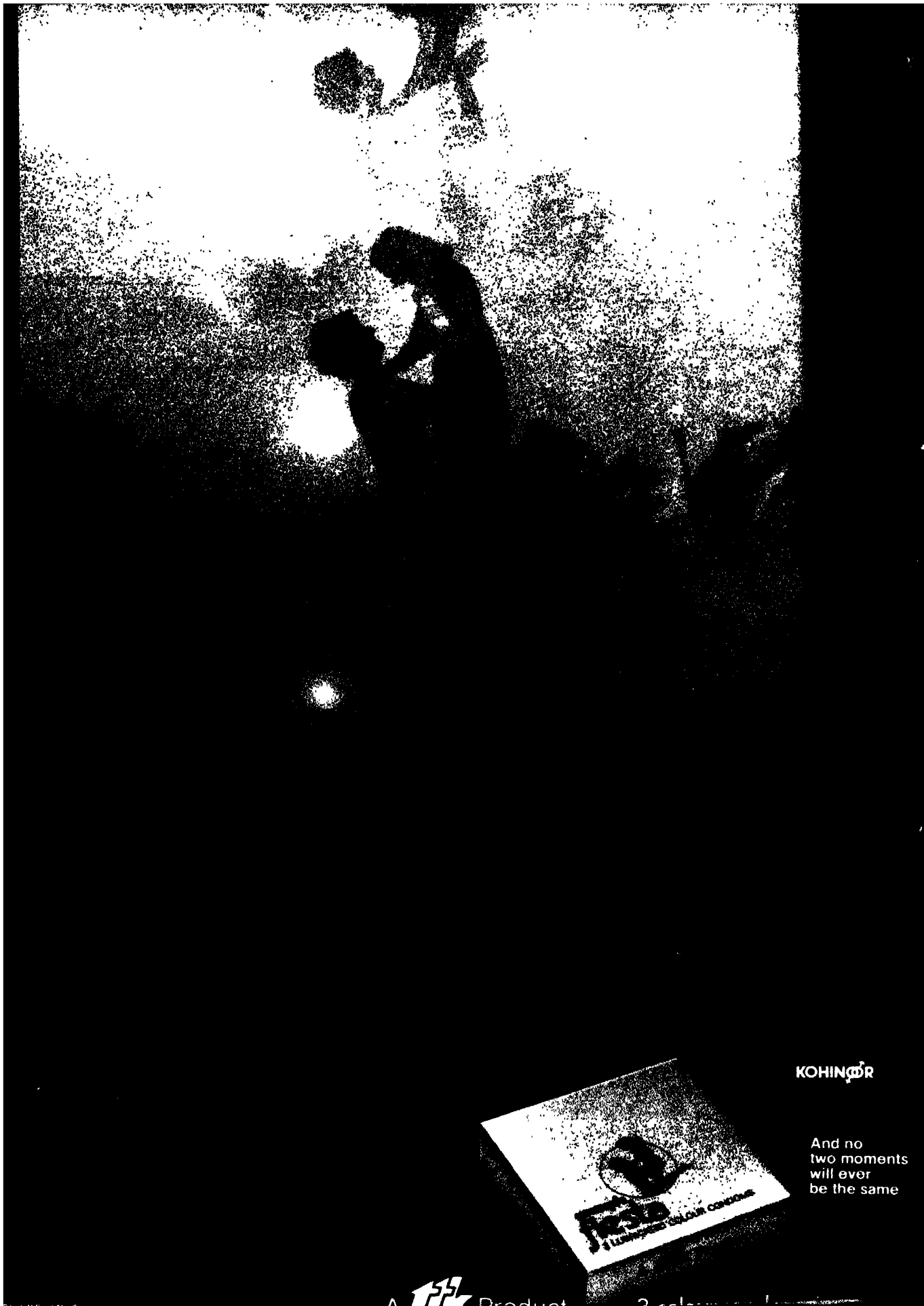
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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Paris: Parisians are extremely dedicated about living up to their reputations, particularly that element of it which can make life miserable for any visitor who does not speak French. Our taxidriver, for instance, did his damndest to ensure that we missed our appointment at the palace, but clearly God is on the side of visitors rather than the Parisians. We just made it. Having heard all the stories, we set off forty five minutes in advance to cover what a government official had cheerily described as a twenty minute journey. The address was hardly difficult. Elysee Palace, office of the President of France. How the taxidriver converted a twenty minute cruise into a forty five minute odyssey is something which only the French imagination could begin to conceive. It was the last bit which was particularly dramatic. After rounding off from Cleopatra's Needle the Arc D'Triomphe and the National Assembly building, our taxidriver discovered that if he reached his destination (now merely a minute away) we would still be on time. He immediately took us to the other end of one of the busiest roads in the world at a crawl designed to break the steeliest of hearts. With time running out, we stopped the cab and approached the nearest Parisian who looked as if he would not mind too much if addressed in English. (The Parisians know the language all right, it is just that they refuse to speak it on principle. They haven't forgotten Waterloo.)

Caught our taxidriver let out a long series of oohs and aahs and "Monsieur Elysee Palais" as if he had never heard the damn name. Now he swung his vehicle into a clear road, gallantly broke a few laws and reached the palace circa the appointed hour of 11.30.

You can immediately see why every President of France has his nose tilted about forty five degrees towards the sky. France may have become the first Republic in modern history. But its leader still lives amid the splendour of kings. The Palace looks as if a superb museum had been converted into a household if you want to check the time for instance, all you have to do is to look at the ornate clock which some generation of Louis put up to see whether it was time to work or play. The long tail coats of the staff, the rich carpers, the clocks which have timed so many destinies, the vast canvasses recording the artistic vanities of so many ages, the tall, gold lined doors that have decorated so

many period movies, the gendarme in traditional uniforms clicking to attention on the gravelled courtyard it is a completely different world from the traffic jams and the flexible morality an inch beyond the high gates of this palace. Well perhaps the one thing they have in common is the flexible morality.

After having met my share of those who run the world, it now comes as a surprise if I meet anyone who looks like his photograph. Francois Mitterrand does. Phlegmatic, socialist Mitterrand. A face which spends all its time refusing to succumb to the temptation of emotion. But, like any reasonable journalist I begin to scratch. Mildly, of course. And then,



You can immediately see why every President of France has his nose tilted about forty-five degrees towards the sky. France may have become the first Republic in modern history. But its leader still lives amid the splendour of kings.

first in fleeting spasms, then in more sustained patches, the socialist Mitterrand begins to emerge—the man who has argued and won a hundred battles before he defeated the editorials and the opinion polls to win an unexpected victory over Giscard d'Estaing. The challenge of accusation rouses him. France, the nation which sends troops to 'settle' the problem in Chad, is neo colonial, I suggest. What is the difference between French troops going to defend a pro Paris regime in Africa and Soviet troops doing the same for Moscow in Afghanistan? Mitterrand's answer is semantics touched with holier than thou morality but the spirit of argument has been roused. Reciprocity (Rajiv Gandhi had given interviews to the French media, so *quid pro quo*) suddenly for me acquired a dimension that was personal, engaging and beyond the boredom of professional duty. An audience had been touched by a spark of humanity. And the Mitterrand who welcomes us with a cool ever imperial handshake, said in *revon* with a smile.

Snapshot images. It costs ten francs to get a drink of bottled water in the P.M. Saint Jacques Hotel. A glass of beer in the pavement cafe outside costs only eight. The choice is not difficult. The hotels look like a bazar and cost as much as a palace, but you do not argue with hoteliers when nature is in a good mood in Paris. You kiss their lotus feet and grab the key if they deign to give you a room. Paris in June as Maurice Chevalier said (or should have if he did not) is when little girls learn the difference between boys and men. The sun is glorious, the stars are confetti and the pregnant moon sparkles over the packed cafes of the Latin quarter. As if all this was not enough the franc is cheap. A whole library of Mills and Boons could not begin to compete with Paris in such a mood. A light, open cotton shirt is enough and naturally looks better on the women. Casual but superbly elegant, the cotton crinkled yet smart, the hairstyles tending toward but not dominated by the mohawk, bald sides and tail. The sunglasses reminiscent of the Fifties. Trousers sloping. The bridges are as Renoir painted them. The waiters flirt outrageously with the women. A nude or semi nude woman advertises almost every product on the bill boards. Paris remains a stunning reminder of French grace and genius, particularly in summer.

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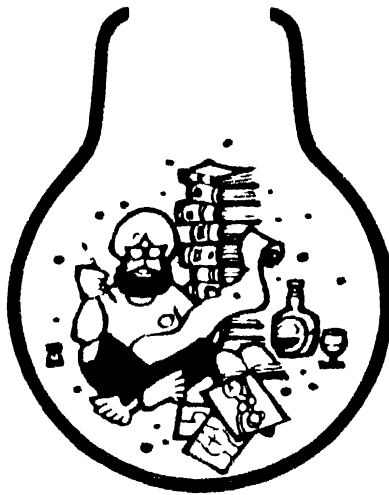
Escape from Death

In the block of apartments where I live we have a summer problem with the sun. A squarish plot of grass which divides the block has only a few trees which provide shade. Of these, on my side of the park there is only one, a thick foliated mulberry. Since I am the earliest riser in the neighbourhood I manage to park my car under this tree. Others have to suffer the blistering heat of the sun for most of the day.

One afternoon last week I was feeling very lethargic and trying to find some excuse for not going for my daily swim. I decided it was too hot and sultry and the pool would inevitably be very crowded. So why not a longer snooze in an air conditioned comfort? I was woken by the rattling of my windows. A fierce dust storm was sweeping across with dark clouds coming in its rear. I changed my mind. Not many people would venture out in the storm and I might have the pool to myself. I picked my bathing trunks, rubber cap and towel and ran to my car. I had driven no more than a dozen yards when two huge branches of the mulberry tree which had provided shade to my car came crashing down. If I had been a few seconds late my tinsel Maruti would have been wrecked. If I had been in it I would not be writing this column.

Why did I have this miraculous escape? Rationally speaking it was a fortunate coincidence that I had changed my mind just in the nick of time. But something kept nagging my mind about fate, luck and predestination. When my friends asked me to what I owed my continued existence, I laughed and explained it away in traditional phraseology. "Some good *karma* in my previous birth. Perhaps saved a cow from slaughter. Or more likely did good service to a Brahmin maiden."

Hair breadth escapes are a daily occurrence. "Apparently there is nothing that cannot happen" wrote Mark Twain. In *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare put it flatly. "As the old hermit of Prague, that never saw per and ink very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc, 'that that is, is' I was not meant to be crushed inside my car but perhaps die in some hospital ward. "He that is born to be hanged shall never be drowned" wrote Thomas Fuller.



There is an element of the incredible in hair breadth escapes that refuses to accept coincidence as the only explanation and prods speculation. I recall during my days in England a most bizarre accident. A plane on its way from Dublin to London caught fire in the air. The pilot made a desperate effort to make a landing strip near Mill Hill where I was living. Just as the plane was coming over a row of houses its belly hit a chimney and broke into two. All passengers and crew were killed save one air hostess who was seated at the tail end of the cabin. She was flung out of her seat and fell into a private bathing pool—without a scratch on her body. In the same category fall instances when in the same car accident while some are mangled beyond recognition others go without any injury. A rationalist who does not accept theories of the Hand of Providence, predestination or *karma* has a better answer than ascribe them to luck.

Can people determine the way they will die? People who take their own lives certainly can. Those not suicide prone have little say about the manner of their departure. They can tempt fate by doing things they should not be doing like drinking or smoking excessively and thus bringing on cirrhosis of the liver or lung cancer. Not much more. There was a case reported in *The Times* of London where contrary to medical advice a man who is in his eighties continued to play a vigorous game of tennis. Nothing would please me more than to die on a tennis court, he asserted. A damn hard smash to win a set and then collapse. That will be world. His wish was partly fulfilled. He did die on a tennis court but not

after a match winning smash. He collapsed after serving a double-fault.

Sri Lanka

Thirteen years ago, the Sinhalese decided to rename their country. They dropped Ceylon and reverted to the ancient title, Sri Lanka. We Indians had always known it as Lanka (without the honorific Sri) as it is mentioned in the *Ramayana*. The name Ceylon was probably given by the Chinese who called it *Srilan* from which the Dutch *Zeilan* and the English *Ceylon* were derived. The Portuguese called it *Ceilano*. To the Arabs it was *Saran dila*—arabic *dib* being the same as the Sanskrit *dweep* meaning island. The word *Serendipity*, the faculty of making happy discoveries by accident, also owes its origin to Sri Lanka. In 1754 Horace Walpole took the word from the title of a fairy tale, *The Three Princes of Serendip*, the heroes of which were always making chance discoveries. All this information I got from John Silverlight's *Word* (Macmillan). But even he does not mention the genesis of the name *Lanka*. Any guesses?

Likee Washee?

This anecdote is about two Indians settled in England. One had been living there for some years and had caught on to some of their quaint euphemisms. The other, a recent settler, was as yet unaware of them. They were invited for dinner by their English friends. After they had their drinks their hostess asked them, "Would you like a wash before I serve dinner?" The knowledgeable one replied "No thanks." The new settler replied "I washed my hands before I came."

On their way back after dinner the older settler admonished his friend.

"My dear chap in England would you like a wash does not mean would you like to wash your hands." It is a polite way of asking would you like to urinate?" The new settler made a mental note of it. Some days later when he was invited by another English friend and after he had his drink he was asked by his hostess,

"Would you like a wash before I serve dinner?" He replied promptly, "No thank you madam. I washed against a tree before coming to your house."

Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan—Hospital

An Appeal for Funds

□ Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan is a charitable maternity-hospital run under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Dakshineswar, Calcutta 700076, a religious body registered in 1960 under the Act 1860.

□ Started in 1950 with only 10 beds, this hospital has been growing steadily. At present, there are 64 beds, 32 of which are free, an operation theatre, a labour room, a clinical laboratory, outdoor clinics and special baby clinics. Medicines are supplied free to needy patients and children.

□ The cost of diet, medicines and other services have been rising constantly. Today it costs Rs. 10,000 per year to maintain one free bed. The Matri Bhavan has been running on a deficit budget for sometime. Apart from this, the institution has taken up the Poor Children Welfare Scheme since 1967, in which high-protein bread is supplied daily to 200 children from very low income areas, as well as 56 expectant mothers.

□ To render better services to the public, the hospital needs to be extended. The cost of the numerous important constructions, including buying a plot of land near the hospital and maintenance of the wards is about Rs 12 lakhs.

□ We therefore, humbly request the generous public to come forward and help a noble cause.

□ All donations are exempt from Income Tax under Sec 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961.

□ Cheques may be drawn in favour of **Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan** and be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan, 7A, Sree Mohan Lane, Calcutta 700 026.

Pravrajika Mukti-prana
General Secretary
Ramakrishna Sarada Mission



Festivals of the Poor

In our country, every institution has been politicised over the years. Whether it is engaged in economic research or promoting art or choosing persons for different projects or, for that matter, deciding the nature of various projects, all institutions depend on what strings they can pull, and how hard.

Therefore, I was not surprised by the selection of artistes for the Festivals of India in France and America. The selectors have always shown a partiality towards their favourites who make up for their deficiencies by pulling strings. Since Pupul Jayakar, the boss of the Festivals, and Narayanan Menon, chief of the Sangeet Natak Akademy, have been given unbridled powers, "personal whims" have understandably had a role to play in the selection of artistes. After all, they have no set guidelines to follow nor have they laid down any. With such a high degree of favouritism and political pressure (this time the daughters of top civil servants of a state are in the troupe) it is understandable why Yamini Krishnamurthy, Uma Sharma and Sonal Mausingh did not find a place among those selected.

But I have not been able to appreciate their point. Their non-selection for the Festivals is no reflection of their merit. All it means is that they are not as resourceful as they once were. After all, when they were selected, many deserving candidates were left out. My main point of criticism against Mrs Jayakar and her team is regarding the concept of the Festivals. By flying elephants, camels and bears abroad, they are trying to perpetuate the myth that India is the country it was in the days of the British Raj. Indeed, the country, despite its technical and scientific advancement, is still considered by many foreigners as a place of snake charmers, caparisoned elephants and naked *fakirs*. Most of them do not want to get out of their world of make-believe and therefore, relish TV serials like the *Jewel in the Crown* and films like *A Passage to India*, which feed their prejudices.

I cannot understand why Mrs Jayakar and her team are so naive as to imagine that only the India of the past will attract foreigners. The government's tourism literature also suffers from the same notion. Almost every brochure shows and mentions elephants, camels and courtesans. Naturally, when foreigners visit India, they are disappointed because modern India is different. Elephants, camels, monkeys and snakes there are, but they do not dominate the scene. One leading Indian artiste said, commenting on the Festivals, "The government is making a monkey of India." I also see no point in taking folk dancers, folk singers and *qawals* abroad for these shows. What are

they supposed to convey? They cannot provide any entertainment to a foreign audience because the music is so alien to them and they have become so *filmi* in their presentation that they are not even genuinely representative of our cultural traditions. And suppose foreigners do come to India, where are they expected to find these folk dancers and the rest of the troupe?

My impression is that Mrs Jayakar and her team see India through the eyes of foreigners who probably want the country to stay as a museum relic. They would like us to preserve our snake charmers, dancing girls and the rope trick because they consider them a part of our ancient culture. And they do not want it to be ruined by modern civilisation. Their views are much like the views most of us share about the changes in the countryside. While villagers are reluctant to continue living in 18th-century conditions, we regret the fact that modernisation is ruining their simple lifestyle.

I do not want to discuss the cost of such Festivals. (The Festival of India in the US has cost 150 million dollars.) But I do want to find out if the "interest" in India thus created generates enough foreign exchange for the country, both in terms of trade and the flow of tourists. The experience of the last Festival in London was not too happy. The British this year are not too favourably disposed towards India, especially on the issue of the Sikhs. Even trade between India and Britain has not shown any marked upward trend. In fact, the relations between the two countries are worse than before.

The holding of such 'Festivals' abroad can be likened to the strenuous efforts of a poor man to impress a rich relative—to make him believe that he is now better off but being misunderstood as still poor. And poor Indians back in India who have seen part of the Festivals, thanks to TV coverage through satellite, do at times ask each other what the spectacle is all about. Maybe, it takes their minds off the realities of a hard, dreary existence. But facts are facts: More than half the people do not have even proper drinking water facilities. Now there is to be yet another Festival in the Soviet Union, followed by many more in other countries. It is time the government considered what kind of India it wants to project. So far the belief has been that "there is no business like show business" and the more exotic the spectacle the better. But is this today's India? And how does all this fit into the 21st century into which Rajiv is supposed to take the country?

I personally think that Mrs Jayakar, who has done a tremendous job in reviving old handicrafts, is obsessed with whatever is old. She does not seem to know what should be discarded. Old is not always gold.

Mrs (Pupul) Jayakar and her team see India through the eyes of foreigners who probably want the country to stay as a museum relic. They would like us to preserve our snake charmers, dancing girls and the rope trick because they consider them a part of our ancient culture.

The Video Menace

As rightly pointed out by Lekha Dhar in *Is Video Killing Cinema?* (9-15 June), television and video is threatening the very existence of the multi-crore Hindi film industry. People are shying away from theatre halls and video piracy has eaten into the vitals of the industry. Illegal video parlours are mushrooming much to the detriment of Indian cinema. The government should take emergent steps to check the illegal video business.

Nirmaljeet Singh Walia, Calcutta

- The cover story was absorbing as it dealt with a problem which should be the concern of all. However, I did not appreciate the picture on the cover. SUNDAY could have published a sober photograph as it is a family magazine read even by children.

Sameek Guhathakurta, Calcutta

- I was surprised to learn that the government is indifferent to the crisis the film industry is facing. It is indeed a pity that an industry which contributes a substantial amount to the national exchequer is given a step-motherly treatment by the government. Prakash Mehra was right in suggesting that the industry should close down for some time to make the government aware of its contribution.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur

- I did not appreciate the still from *Saagar* reproduced on the cover. It did not do justice to a dignified magazine like SUNDAY.

Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

Terror Wave

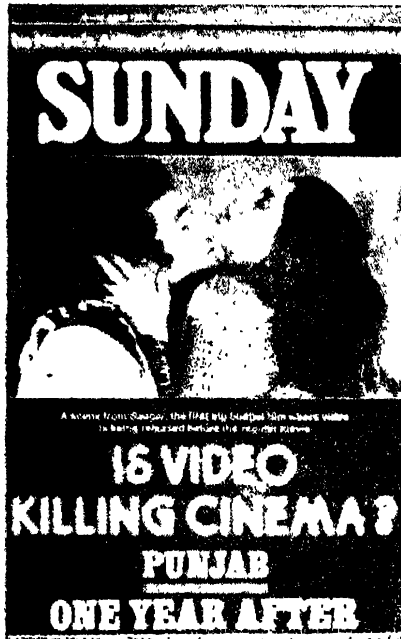
The cover story on the recent extremist activities of Sikh terrorists was informative (*The Sant's Revenge*, 19-25 May). While condemning those who unleashed the wave of terror in the capital, I must praise the restraint displayed by both the Hindus and the Sikhs in the face of such provocation.

M.H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

- The intelligence agencies once again failed in the face of a crisis. Strictest punishment should be meted out to those who killed and maimed the innocents. My deep sympathies for the victims of the bomb blasts.

Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan

- Sankarshan Thakur and Shubhab-



rata Bhattacharya's incisive reports on the Delhi bomb blasts were thought-provoking. It is unfortunate that instead of settling differences across the table, a section of the Sikh community have resorted to terror tactics. Violence begets violence and the day is not far off when the Sikhs will lose the sympathy of the Hindus. *Subas Ram, Anandpur (Orissa)*

- M.J. Akbar rightly pointed out that the "most dangerous phase in the Punjab crisis is always on the eve of a settlement." The extremists sought to vitiate the atmosphere of cordiality prevailing between the Hindus and the Sikhs through random killings. The emergence of the extremist faction as the more dominant group was also disturbing. The so-called moderates in the Akali Dal have always lacked the courage to put up a strong resistance against the resurgence of extremism.

Swapan Basu, Calcutta

Leisure Spots

Every week I look forward to the Teasers column. However, here is a suggestion: the numbers given in Cryptocross is difficult to decipher. An artist should be deployed to write out the numbers.

G. Subrahmanyam, Vizianagaram

- When will Asterix be back in SUNDAY? I used to enjoy the innocent jokes of Obelix, the antics of Cacofonix and the funny ways of Vitalstatist-

tix and his company.
Rangan Ganguly, Durgapur

Tolerant Attitude

The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims (9-15 June) dispelled the misconception about the holy book in the minds of a section of the non-Muslims. The author had dealt with the subject honestly. However, while mentioning the *tafsir* of Maulana Azad, the writer remarked that he (Maulana Azad) completed only 23 *surahs* out of 30. But the Koran contains 114 *surahs* and not 30 as mentioned by Dr Zakaria.

Quazi Shahab Zahir, Burnpur

- Rafiq Zakaria's article will remove doubts from the minds of those who have misgivings and suspicions about Islam and the Koran. All holy books should be immune from executive, legislative and judicial interference and scrutiny and we should all respect what Mahatma Gandhi had said: "I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. A friendly study of world's religion is a sacred duty."

S. Hassan Imam, Calcutta

Misled Leader

MJ. Akbar's interview with G.M. Sayed, the Sindhudesh leader, was absorbing (26 May-1 June). He admitted that *Pakistan is a Creation of Hatred* but he was one of those who divided India. And now he wants to create another state: Sindhudesh. I was happy to learn that G.M. Sayed adored leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. But he seems to have learnt very little of the philosophy of Gandhi and Nehru as his own views are sectarian and parochial.

M. Waid Khan, Aligarh

- After going through the interview with G. M. Sayed, I remained unimpressed by his arguments. Leaders like G. M. Sayed and Fazlul Haque, inspite of having a strong provincial base, succumbed to the manipulative politics of M.A. Jinnah. They subscribed to the Muslim League's contention that the Muslims of the sub-continent were suffering under the oppression of British imperialism and the dictatorial attitude of the Indian National Congress.

Murad Ali Kader, Chittagong (Bangladesh)

Shun Violence

Sant Longowal's view that 'The Sikh has Begun to Wonder Whether He can Live in India' (31 March—6 April) made one think whether the government was right in releasing the Akali leaders and initiating conciliatory moves. A Sant is supposed to pacify the militants but Sant Longowal seemed to incite the extremists. What is more surprising is the role of the Sikh intelligentsia; they have so far said nothing against the violence in Punjab. The Sikhs had been pressing for an enquiry into the Delhi riots following Indira Gandhi's assassination, which has been granted. But what about an enquiry into the killing of innocent Hindus in Punjab?

M R Venkatesh, New Delhi

• Enough harm has been done to the country by the obstinate stand of the Sikh leadership. We have lost our beloved Prime Minister and the country is in a shambles. Sant Longowal, known as a moderate, should persuade his community to give up violence.

P N Choudhury, Dharmanagar (Tirupura)

Save Calcutta

The photographs of Calcutta reproduced in SUNDAY brings out the truth in the Prime Minister's assertion that Calcutta is a dying city (Calcutta, Calcutta 14—20 April). However, if you ask a Calcuttan about the state of the city, he will be all praises for the city. But most outsiders who visit Calcutta often are of the view that the city is certainly decaying.

Bhargavi Advaiti, Madras

• The people of Calcutta and Bengalis in particular, have been hurt by the Prime Minister's disparaging remarks about the city. SUNDAY seems to have added substance to Rajiv Gandhi's remark by publishing photographs which only portray the darker side of the city. Instead of

Sour Gossip

Khushwant Singh's gossip column (19 May) was devoid of any sweetness. It was quite sour, and very boring. If he does not have any new ideas, he can always fall back on criticising the Congress(I). However, his item, *Gulabi Angrezi* (12 May), in a previous issue made very good reading.

Rama Bisht, Meerut

Who is Responsible for the Sordid Mess?

Are Teachers Destroying Secondary Education in UP? (31 March—6 April) was an interesting, balanced and thought provoking article. Nirmal Mitra had put forward the points of views of both the protagonists: Madhyamik Shikshak Sangh and the Uttar Pradesh Parents' Association (UPPA). However, I wish to raise a few relevant points which Mr Chaturvedi, spokesman of the Parents' Association, has chosen to ignore. Are teachers the only ones responsible for the sorry state of education in UP? Acute power shortage and the role of the parents are factors that

should be considered while analysing the state of affairs. Moreover, Mr Chaturvedi should have considered the fact that in UP 60 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and have no means to send their children to schools which charge exorbitant fees.

Though I agree that the political activities of the teachers have led to a worsening of the situation, I fail to understand how and from where does the UPPA manage to get money for printing expensive advertisements in newspapers.

Mahendra Pratap, Varanasi

The Irresponsible Press

Sunday appears to be a platform for airing the grievances of a few leaders who, while wanting all the benefits for their own community, ignore and disrespect other communities. Though freedom of the press is absolutely essential, airing of such views will only encourage many disgruntled elements to nurture regional and communal feelings.

B Bhattacharjee, Shillong

• In the early Forties, it was the British who made the mistake of identifying the Muslim League as the true representatives of the Muslims. What followed was secessionism and finally, partition. Today, it appears that the media, by giving undue importance to leaders advocating communalism, is following the foot steps of the British.

Prashant Kumar Mishra, Jamalpur

Tamilians are Hurt

Khushwant Singh's brief write up on the Tamilians was unwarranted and uncalled for (*Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 5-11 May). The article has hurt the sentiments of all Tamilians. Moreover, it was unfair on the part of a renowned journalist like Khushwant Singh to use words like 'monsters' and 'fellows' while describing the Tamilians.

C Palaniappan, Madras

• The article was in bad taste. The remarks about the people of Tamil Nadu and their culture only exposed the contempt the writer nourishes against fellow Tamilians. When efforts are being made to foster national unity, such articles are bound to drive a wedge between communities.

S Ramamurthi, Madras

• I was surprised that SUNDAY published such a biased piece.

Raja Iyer, Calcutta

Last Letter

Thanks to Punjab, Delhi, Bihar, Tripura, Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, India has achieved national integration, at least through violence.

M Garg, Calcutta

Housing Problems

Ex MPs in Search of Homes (5—11 May) depicted the irresponsible behaviour of our honourable Members of Parliament. In spite of losing the confidence of the people, these ex MPs continue to occupy the houses once allotted to them in contravention of all laws.

Debasis Ghosh, Krishnanagar (West Bengal)

THE MESS IN GUJARAT

With the caste war already claiming a heavy toll—80 dead and more than 300 injured since January—Gujarat, the state where the apostle of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, was born, is certainly in a mess. Much of it is due to chief minister Madhavsingh Solanki's inept handling of the situation which appears to have gone out of his control. Even the army, called out to restore peace, is finding the task difficult as the war threatens to spread to the countryside and turn into communal frenzy. To all this, CM Solanki has added his own war, a war against the Press, for its criticism of the government, especially the police, for actively participating in the loot and arson. Gujarat's chief minister, instead of putting his own house in order, has retaliated by beating up several journalists and burning newspaper offices. TUSHAR BHATT reports from Ahmedabad on Gujarat's continuing agony and examines why CM Solanki must go if peace is to return to the state.



Street urchins and poor people retrieve whatever they can from the burnt shops in Ahmedabad

Sandeep Shankar

A Gujarati idiom—"Doshi mare teno bhay nathi, pan jam ghar bhali jay tenu shun?"—aptly sums up the dilemma that the centre and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi face in tackling the four-month-old turmoil in the state. The solution that has been obvious for quite some time is to remove chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki. It has also been equally apparent that the high command would not mind getting Mr Solanki to resign, but for the fear of setting a bad precedent. The legitimacy of an elected government could be brought into question by people taking to the streets. (The Gujarati idiom talks about death in a family. The family is worried, not so much about the death of the old woman who had been sick for some time and had made life unbearable for everyone, but about what would happen if after her demise, the god of death, Yama, haunted the house repeatedly.)

This is precisely why Mr Solanki got a reprieve when he held talks with the Prime Minister and other leaders in New Delhi on 21 June. Though dissatisfied with Solanki's performance, the centre wanted to act cautiously for yet another reason unconnected with the stir. The budget for this year is yet to be passed by the Gujarat Assembly.

On his return from New Delhi Mr Solanki spoke of an action plan being implemented to firmly deal with violence and rioting. It appears that he had been told to abide by the centre's advice even in the past. Mr Solanki refused to divulge the nature of the plan being implemented, but he will definitely use the lease on life granted to him to impress the Congress(I) high command.

The situation in Gujarat is marked by a curious amalgam of continuing violence which has already taken a toll of some 170 lives, disrupted the economy of the state, and exposed the glaring incompetence of the barely 100-day-old second Solanki-led ministry. There is little doubt in political circles, even those close to the Congress(I), that the centre would have sacked a state government for lesser faults and long ago had it been a non-Congress(I) ministry. After several weeks of investigation by an all-opposition fact-finding mission of members of Parliament Mr Solanki was found incapable of restoring peace and normalcy in Gujarat.

Political observers argue that, because of his ineptitude, a new kind of riot has emerged in the country—caste violence intermixed with communal clashes. In the process, the

57-year-old journalist-turned-advocate-turned-politician Mr Solanki has ended up presenting the country and ruling party with a nationwide problem: the reservation system for backward classes. Before his 11 January offer of an 18 per cent increase in the quota for the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC), there was no visible opposition to the reservation policy in the country as a whole. Even now, no opposition party has been able to muster enough courage to say that it is opposed to setting apart places for the downtrodden. And yet, the Prime Minister had to announce that a national consensus would have to be evolved on reservations for other



An army jawan patrolling the riot-torn areas of Ahmedabad

backward classes. While the Harijans and tribals enjoy statutory reservations, other backward classes have been given preferences by individual states in varying measures. The bungling on this issue by Mr Solanki has forced the centre to talk of the consensus now. "Mr Solanki can well be hailed as a leader of anti-reservationists for what he had done to cause doubts about the policy for other backward classes," said a dissident Congress(I) leader, almost mockingly.

What has been more alarming is the lawlessness that has accompanied the anti-reservation agitation over the past four months. The agitators have been insisting that they are

not responsible for the communal or caste violence. One of the conditions the movement's leaders have been pressing for is the setting up of a judicial probe headed by a High Court judge to look into the causes of the violence and determine who was responsible for it.

There have been widespread allegations by opposition parties that the lumpen elements supporting the Congress(I) were behind the blood-bath. The Congress(I) says the very same thing about the *goondas* belonging to the other side. To a common man, the role of the lumpen elements entrenched in the political power structure has been horrifying. The frequent eruption of communal and caste violence and incidents of knifing in major cities like Ahmedabad and Baroda has created an unprecedented sense of insecurity among the people.

Besides, the Solanki government has been under pressure from its own three lakh employees who have been demanding reforms in the roster system of accelerated promotions for the Harijans and tribals. The employees have been on an indefinite strike since 7 June—for the second time in one month—on this issue. The employees of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation too have joined the strike now. The government claims that the strike had evoked a poor response. It was more of a public relations exercise than a statement of fact. Irrespective of the number of people reporting for duty, the work in government offices has been badly affected because a majority of the strikers are middle-level employees, the backbone of the bureaucracy. The case for the removal of Mr Solanki, who has become the first chief minister in Gujarat since 1960 to have completed a full term and to have gone into the next, has been formidable. One salient feature of the handling of the situation in the face of the current agitation, launched in a spectacular manner with the boycott of examinations from 18 February, is the inability of the chief minister to assume a position of authority.

The correct handling of such agitations can be a good test of leadership. When these agitations go on and paralyse normal life, the endeavour of the rulers should be to snatch away the initiative from the agitation leaders by offering concessions in such a manner that the stir would get defused even as the government keeps a brave front. If the record of the past four months is any indication, Mr Solanki has failed to deal properly with this agitation. The failure did not stem from the fact that

Gagging the Press

There is a belief among Indians that no one poses a greater danger to their movement than a former leftist. By the same token, the Gujarat chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki, a former journalist, would seem to be endangering the press. At the 19 June meeting of state information ministers in New Delhi he had sought "firm control of the press in the larger public interest," whenever the newspapers came in the way of the government's efforts to maintain peace and harmony. The hard-hitting speech came barely four days after the *Indian Express* editor Ramnath Goenka made a statement against the seizure of thousands of copies of his Ahmedabad-based Gujarati daily, *Jansatta*, dated 10 June. His

stern signs of normalcy one section or the other of the press, in the name of defending their freedom, has always ended up exciting public passions and obstructing the return to normalcy. For some, concern for public interest is synonymous with the propagation of certain vested interests."

The relationship between the press and the chief minister was placid throughout his first term, though he was unhappy about the adverse comments on dissidence in the Congress(1). During the first anti-reservation agitation in 1981, the coverage in one or two dailies in Ahmedabad had upset him. However, his overall strategy was to say as little as possible to the press about various controversies and later

of the story. Most of the time, it amounted to appeals, backed up by the little-known organization's propaganda material. Advertisements were released in the newspapers to propagate these views. Some of the government also bought advertising space to air their views. Newsmen collected material from their own sources and made allegations of atrocities which had become an embarrassment to the authorities, some local newspapermen said. The advertising campaign undermined the credibility of the government.

The campaign also shifted the focus from individual newsmen to the newspaper organisations. The government felt that not only were some individuals against it—especially against the chief minister—but some papers, too. On the night of 9 June, when the details of the arson at Dariyapur were not yet available, reporters in local dailies tapped their sources in hospitals. *Jansatta*, of the *Express* group, published the names of the eight ill-fated people. Jayanti Shukla, the 65-year-old editor, told SUNDAY, "It was only meant to give news. The community of the victims was not identified nor was any comment offered. The box item simply contained the names and ages of the dead."

What is surprising is that even as the presses were rolling, the government got information about publication of the report; it got an order passed and sent the police to seize some 40,000 copies of the paper. Ramesh Bhatt, general manager of the paper, said that although the Rajkot edition of *Jansatta* had not carried the names, some 30,000 copies of that edition, too, were seized. The seizure is to be challenged in the court of law. "We will not kneel under such pressures," said a spokesman of the group. So the government feared that on 14 June, the group would announce a strike against the government. The government, however, did not seem to be worried.



Express owner Ramnath Goenka (left) and Solanki: at war

offence: printing the names of eight persons, including those of three women and children, who were burnt alive in a house in Dabgarwad area in Dariyapur, where communal rioting broke out on 9 June. It was considered to be inflammatory material by the government. The incident set off an angry reaction in the fourth estate. The *Indian Express* and *Jansatta* seemed to be the only papers that seemed to be

complain that it was all one-sided and distorted. During the current agitation, the burning of the office of *Gujarat Samachar* and the *Western Times*, on 22 April came as a shock to many. The same day the *Indian Express* and *Jansatta*, who had criticised the police's behaviour, were attacked. Thankfully, the attackers were soon driven away by the army. However, several newspapers were beaten up. The police, however, did not seem to be worried.



Policemen on their rounds in Ahmedabad; in the background are shops burnt by rioters

the Solanki government, having won 149 of the 182 seats in the state Assembly only recently, did not want to budge an inch from its stand. It simply had no sense of timing. The result was that by hook or by crook, the anti-reservationists extracted several concessions without making any material changes in their original stand.

In the process, the Congress(I) government in Gujarat has found itself groping in the dark for a face-saving formula with the agitators, which in turn would undermine its stature in the eyes of the backward classes. For many of these, Mr Solanki has been following a policy of appeasement towards the upper castes, just to continue in power. The genesis of the turmoil is worth restating briefly to underline what a futile confrontation it has been. On 11 January Devji Vanvi, a junior minister in the first Solanki team, announced that the quota of the SEBC would be raised from the current ten per cent to 28 per cent, taking the total reservations, including the 21 per cent for the Harijans and tribals, to 49 per cent. It was a political step since the Assembly polls were round the corner. What baffled many at that time and what confuses many even now is the hurry with which the decision

was taken, since Rajiv Gandhi had led the Congress(I) to a spectacular victory in the Lok Sabha polls. In Gujarat, the party bagged 24 of the 26 Lok Sabha seats leaving little doubt about how it would perform in the state elections too. Supporters of Mr Solanki explain that he wanted to make doubly sure that the Congress(I) would win a massive victory. On the other hand, his opponents within the party say he was unsure if he would be drafted as chief minister for another term, and so he wanted to go out in a blaze of glory as the saviour of the backward classes. In retrospect, it now seems this was an altogether unwarranted step.

The rationale behind the increase was understandable. On the basis of their population, the backward classes could stake a claim for even a higher quota of reservations. But the scheme went wrong in its finer details. The Rane Commission, on whose recommendations an increase of 18 per cent was being offered, had also recommended adoption of the economic criteria, to decide the group of other backward classes (SEBC) who are to be given preference by the state government. The commission criticised the caste criteria adopted in doing this, arguing that it tended to reinforce the caste

barriers rather than demolish them. It is pertinent to remember that the original stir was against this hike for the SEBC and had nothing to do with the reservations for the Harijans and tribals. Politically also, it would have been a justifiable step to raise the quota since 73 per cent of the voters belonged to the four KHAM groups of the Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims. The mischief lay in the fact that not only did the Solanki government retract the economic criteria suggested by the Rane Commission, it also did not add groups of people to the list of 82 SEBC groups. One of the intentions behind the Rane exercise was to increase the number of these groups because there were complaints that many other deserving backward groups had been left out of the list of 82.

The way in which the Solanki ministry handled the commission's report and arrived at its decisions smacked of political dishonesty. This became even clearer in February when within six weeks or so of the decision, an agitation was started against it. The government said it had not implemented the decision to hike the quota, leaving it to the new government. It had also set up a committee headed by

After Solanki Who?

Who can succeed Madhavji Solanki as chief minister of Gujarat? This is a vexed question. Over the years all his opponents within the party have either been driven out of the Congress(I) or condemned to political wilderness within it. Among the few names being mentioned are Ranjitsinh Gaekwad, MP, Atwarial Shah, Speaker of the Gujarat Assembly, Narsinh Makwana, senior Congress(I) MP, Amarsinh Choudhary, Solanki's home and education minister, Yogendra Makwana, union minister of state for health, Miss Kumud Joshi, MP, Ahmed Patel, the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary, Sanat Mehta, former finance minister and Mahant Vijaydasji, president of the GPCC(I).



Amarsinh Choudhary

Mr Gaekwad, a prince from the erstwhile royal family of Baroda, is being tipped to replace Mr Solanki. He is youthful, educated, softspoken and dignified and a friend of Rajiv Gandhi.

In 1980, Mr Gaekwad had won both the state Assembly and parliamentary seats from Baroda. His name was mentioned as a possible CM for a while, but he was made to quit the state Assembly even before the Congress(I) legislature party met to elect a leader. Mr Gaekwad is close to dissident leaders Jinabhai Darji and Sanat Mehta and the pro-Solanki faction does not favour him. Since the 149-member Congress legislature party is full of Solanki supporters, Mr Gaekwad would face strong opposition if the members of the CLP(I) are given a choice.

Mr Shah, the Speaker, is now neutral, but delinked from the

mainstream. He would be a dissident. A former Praja Socialist Party (PSP) member, he has been close to Mr Mehta. Narsinh Makwana was once a dissident but is now in the Solanki faction. Mr Solanki had overlooked his claim and recommended Yogendra Makwana for a ministerial post in the centre to Mrs Gandhi in 1980. However, Yogendra Makwana too fell out with Mr Solanki and went over to the dissident faction. Narsinh Makwana drifted closer to the chief minister. He is older and politically the more experienced of the Makwanas. Although he has not risen to national fame, he is regarded as a mini-Kamraj because of his manipulative abilities. He is a Harijan leader and thus may be comparatively more acceptable to the ruling party



Yogendra Makwana

than any other dissident.

Amarsinh Choudhary, Mr Solanki's trusted lieutenant is the person the chief minister would like most to succeed him if he has to go. But the fact that the current agitation has been getting out of control is being blamed largely on Mr Choudhary, an engineer-turned-politician. He was rated as a competent minister when he was in charge of irrigation. But since the month of March, as home and education minister he has failed miserably.

Yogendra Makwana would like to get back the chief ministership but he will be opposed tooth and nail by the Solanki faction. The Solanki group has been trying to edge him out of the central cabinet for some years but without success. Mr Makwana has displayed a keen survival instinct in the centre both during the Indira era and now Miss

Kamraj would have been a disaster at the centre. He was close to Mrs Gandhi. She was made aware of Solanki and then turned her back on him. Now she seems to be on the fence. She does not have the same influence with Mrs Gandhi as she did with Indira Gandhi.

Mr Ahmed Patel, the young MP from Broach is said to be close to the Prime Minister by virtue of being his parliamentary secretary. He was in the US with Mr Gandhi recently and has comparatively little experience. At the moment it is necessary to appoint someone better versed in state politics as the chief minister. Sanat Mehta, former finance minister, is an arch-opponent of Mr Solanki. The latter was responsible for the denial of a party ticket to him in the last



Mahant Vijaydasji

Assembly polls. Mr Mehta had a fairly successful tenure as minister in the first Solanki ministry and is one of the few Gujarat leaders known outside. But he will have an uphill task in mustering the legislature party which is full of Mr Solanki's supporters. Also, Mr Mehta is no longer a member of the state Assembly. Mr Mahant, president of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee is also a minister for roads and buildings in the Solanki team. He is a trusted ally of the chief minister and hails from Saurashtra, a neglected region.

This is only a shortlist of possible candidates. The Congress(I) high command is well known for surprising surprises. But in selecting a successor, the party will have to choose a man who can work under constraint and still produce results.

Tushar Shah, Ahmedabad

Harobhai Mehta, an MP from Ahmedabad and a close associate of Mr Solanki, to identify the new groups to be added to the list of the SEBC. The message was clear. If the voters returned the Congress(I), some of the backward groups could be added to the list. A governmental policy decision otherwise justified was transformed into a political gimmick to catch backward class votes.

If the government was scheming its opponents did not seem to be doing anything less culpable. The announcement of the hike resulted in an agitation, a month after it was made. One plausible explanation for the development is that the anti-reservationists were waiting for an opportune moment to strike. This came when the preliminary examinations in colleges and annual examinations in schools were round the corner. The boycott was successful and the examinations were put off. Despite this success, the agitation continued on a low key because even the opposition parties were not interested in alienating the massive backward class vote bank by speaking out against reservations. The stir gathered momentum as Mr Solanki entered office for the second term in March and a *bandh* was called for 18 March. On 16 March Mr Solanki gave in, putting off the hike by a year. Still the agitators anticipating success went ahead with their *bandh*.

That night communal violence erupted for the first time during the current stir. However, no one till today could fully explain why the clash took place, particularly because the Muslims are not benefited very much by reservations. Various theories have been floating around about how the violence began. Some accuse the BJP of inciting it, others say that the Congress(I) with its lumpen elements had a hand in it and again some others say that it was the *Goondas* who started it. Communal violence has been breaking out quite regularly since then. The affected areas include Daryapur, Kalpur, Jamalpur, Raipur, Raikhad, Saraspur, Rakhial, Bapunagar and Odhav. On 22 April the turmoil took on a more frightening dimension when, following the murder of police head constable Taxman Desai by a mob in Khadia, policemen revolted and went on the rampage. Half a dozen newsmen were roughed up, the offices and press of the *Gujarat Samachar*, a staunch critic of the chief minister, and a small English daily, *Western Times*, were gutted and those of the *Indian Express* and *Jansatta*, too, were attacked. The army repulsed the attacks on the

Procession of Violence

For 15 days the state government had been trying to persuade the head priest Mahant Ramharshadasji and the trustees of the Jagdeesh temple in Ahmedabad not to take out the traditional Rath Yatra (chariot procession) of Lord Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra on 20 June. The Yatra is usually taken out from the temple in Jamalpur and passes through Khadia, Saraspur, Daryapur, Shahpur and Delhi Chakla before returning to the temple in the evening. The police had refused permission for the Yatra after all efforts to persuade the temple authorities failed. However, the talks continued till past midnight and there was a great deal of confusion on the morning of 20 June. In fact, the home minister Amarsinh Choudhury had gone to bed late in the night believing that it would not be taken out. But the next morning the Yatra was taken out in defiance of the authorities.

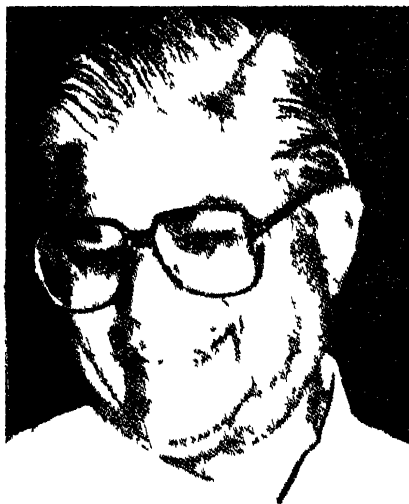
The early morning scene was like something out of a movie of the medieval times. Elephants were used to break open doors. The temple elephants pushed aside police vehicles which were parked outside

the temple to block the ~~door~~ way. Outwitted, the police first released 300 cows from the temple stalls and later brought out the elephants. Outside there was confusion. Chariots bearing the deities were hastily brought out after the elephants had done their duty. Hundreds of people milled around and the large police force was unable to force the Yatra to a stop. It could lead to a stampede.

Everything was peaceful till the Yatra reached Saraspur in the afternoon. The processionists insisted on passing through the strife-torn Daryapur and Shahpur areas, despite official pleas. After the Yatra had wound its way through these localities in the walled city, fighting broke out between rival groups which hurled stones at each other. The army fired 15 rounds to quell the rioting at three places in Daryapur and Shahpur, killing six and wounding 11. The tension in Ahmedabad grew worse, thanks to the incident and the fact that the Rath Yatra this year coincided with Id. The authorities fumbled again and made the matter still worse.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

Express and *Jansatta* offices. This apparently was the climax of the animosity which was building up between the state government and the press (see box item). The police revolt brought the people into confrontation with the guardians of the law. Following reports of police excesses in several localities the public was furious. On the night of 9 May, police sub-inspector Mahendrasingh Rana was shot dead by some rioters.



Gujarat CM Madhavsingh Solanki

The blame for the killing fell on the minority community with the Hindus closing in behind the police now. On 14 May for the first time the chief minister held talks with 30 representatives of the Akhil Gujarat Vahi Mahamandal, a parents' association, and the Akhil Gujarat Navrachna Samiti, a student's body, to sort out differences that could lead to the withdrawal of the stir. The talks failed because the agitators at the height of their movement demanded total abolition of the reservation system and a judicial probe into the violence. The next round took place on 30 May when both sides modified their stand. The agitationists abandoned their demand for total abolition but insisted on scrapping off of the 18 per cent hike and reconsideration of the current ten per cent quota too, and a judicial probe. The government said it has an open mind on the probe and that the hike had been put off. Then the pendulum swung away to violence once more. The call for a Gujarat *bandh* on 7 June coincided with the beginning of the indefinite strike by government employees and came in the middle of a five-day business *bandh* from 5 June by thousands of shopkeepers, in protest against the failure of the law

and order machinery in Ahmedabad. Communal violence broke out once more in the Dariyapur area where eight people, including three women and two teenagers, were burnt to death in a house set on fire during a clash on 9 June. Six others were shot dead by troops in an operation against street fighting. There were several incidents of stabbing, too.

Several points need to be underlined. First, although the government went on making concessions, the latest being in response to an appeal by the Gujarat Nagrik Sangathan, a citizens' forum, the agitators have derived tactical advantages, refusing to withdraw the stir on one pretext or the other. The Sangathan's appeal came on 8 June and the Solanki government tenaciously clung on to it like a drowning man holding a straw. While on the one hand the government was not able to get the better of the stir leaders in the deal, on the other, it has been reluctant to see the police revolt for what it is. It chooses to describe it as "commotion or excitement in the force." Despite severe erosion of its authority all around, the government has been reluctant to use the army. Firstly, it called in the troops rather late. Even when it was facing the police revolt, it did not give the army enough powers to act decisively. Then, on 10-11 May in the wake of the killing of the police sub-inspector, the government entrusted the maintenance of law and order to the troops in the walled areas of Ahmedabad. Even then it was a curious situation. The walled city had not been handed over to the army. The jawans had replaced the policemen but, eventually, their superiors had to secure civilian consent for their actions.

Over the past weeks, the coordination between the army and the civilian authorities has left a lot to be desired. Army officers have been privately complaining of a dearth of intelligence reports being given to them by the police. On the other hand, the police too were not very happy at being excluded from the walled city since it was an admission of their failure. When on 9 June the communal flare-up took place, Dariyapur was facing an indefinite curfew and under the charge of the army. The ferocity of the violence stunned the army and restricted movement in the curfew-bound zone even further. But, by and large, the incident was seen as a clear indication of a lessening of the deterrent effect of the troops. Earlier, the mere presence of a jawan would help restore peace. This time, violent clashes and arson took place in the presence



Anti-reservation activists stopping vehicles during their Rasta Roko programme

of troops. Prolonged exposure of the jawans to the civilian areas has partly contributed to this. It would be difficult to quantify the gains of the army's presence in the walled city. It has prevented the situation from getting worse, but beyond this it has had a limited role. "We can control violence, but we cannot control passions," was how a young officer summed up the situation.

Thus, after 100 days in office the second Solanki cabinet looked like a non-starter, greatly debilitated by a poor sense of timing and worse tactics. One reason why Rajiv Gandhi cannot summarily send Mr Solanki home is that it would mean repetition of what his mother did in 1974 when the Chimanbhai Patel ministry was asked to quit. Instead of petering out, the Nav Nirman agitation had gone gunning for the Assembly which too had to be dissolved in spite of a big majority. The legitimacy of an elected government was thus allowed to be challenged by street action, an idea that should be anathema in a democracy. The second problem for Mr Gandhi is to find a suitable replacement for Mr Solanki. The chief minister has seen to it that all his opponents are in the political wilderness. There are no dissidents worth the name in the legislature party. The organisational wing is studded with his supporters and his Kshatriya clansmen, accounting for 41 per cent of the people, would be unhappy if Mr Solanki were to be sacrificed. One or two names like that of the Congress(I) MP and a friend of Rajiv, Ranjitsinh Gaekwad, are being mentioned as possible re-

placement but there is bound to be vehement opposition from Mr Solanki's supporters. Many fear that Mr Solanki's departure at this juncture could aggravate the situation. And lastly, even though the chief minister has not been discreet, he has by and large been fighting for the correct policies. The Congress(I) high command cannot forget this. "It is a question of the wrong man implementing and making a mess of the right policies," said a Solanki critic, who did not think his departure was imminent.

Mr Gandhi will need to have someone who can implement the reservation policy while neutralising the animosity of the agitators, restore communal harmony and put the state administration on an even keel. This is a tall order and if it ever transpired that the anti-reservationists had succeeded in getting rid of Mr Solanki, there would be no guarantee that his successor may not be under the same pressures to compromise on fundamental issues like reservations. The setting up of the Gujarat Anamat Samarthan Samiti, cutting across party lines to support the reservation policy by the dissident leader, Jinabhai Darji, is the only major pro-reservation public body in the state so far. This organisation is still in an embryonic stage. So, even if he is convinced that Mr Solanki is not very useful, the dilemma for the Prime Minister is the question as to how and when to replace him, without appearing to give up the principles for which Mr Solanki has been battling.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

Why Solanki Should Go

The CM's inept handling of the agitation has only worsened the situation in Gujarat

One of New Delhi's accepted ways of expressing displeasure with a chief minister is to make him wait. After he has sought an appointment with the Prime Minister. The Gujarat chief minister, Madhavsingh Solanki had to cool his heels in the Gujarat Bhawan for more than a day and a half before he could meet with Rajiv Gandhi on the morning of 21 June. Solanki had camped in the state guest house for most of the previous day anxiously expecting a call from the Prime Minister's office but in vain. He sought an appointment and was told that the Prime Minister was busy. He was granted one later but this too was postponed. Solanki was kept on tenterhook. Finally when Solanki did get to see Rajiv Gandhi—after he had extended his stay in the capital—he came in for a lecture from the Prime Minister. Solanki was told how unhappy the centre was at his failure to control the law and order situation in Gujarat. Highly placed sources added that the chief minister had been given a specific time frame within which the centre wanted him to restore normalcy in the state. After his

talks with the Prime Minister Madhavsingh Solanki told the press that he would be meeting the Prime Minister again later in the day but by evening he was on his way to Gandhinagar without having had a second round with Rajiv Gandhi. He had been told to pack his bags and go back as soon as possible to look after matters in Gujarat instead of wasting his time in New Delhi. But the centre seemed stood behind Solanki. A smiling Solanki announced after his meeting with Rajiv Gandhi that he had not been asked to quit. However the centre viewed the situation in Gujarat with growing concern. The Solanki government's failure to deal with the worsening law and order situation in the state has opened the options in Gujarat. Further New Delhi was absolutely closed to any suggestion of a change in the leadership. Now it is even considering President's rule.

One of the factors that has contributed to this change in outlook is a report that the AICC (I) joint secretary, V N Patil who was sent as an observer to Gujarat in the second week of June has submitted to

to Rajiv Gandhi. It has recommended the removal of Madhavsingh Solanki on several grounds one of them being his failure to take command of the situation in the state. The report further recommends the imposition of President's rule. To take care of the threat of "Kshatriya backlash" by the pro Solanki elements in case of his removal it has been suggested that he be worn in as a member of the union council of ministers.

Highly placed AICC (I) sources cite the example of the former Bihar chief minister Chandrashekhar Singh who after being replaced by Bidehvi in Dabey was inducted into the central government to pacify the Kappur lobby in Bihar. The pro Solanki Congressmen in Gujarat have also been warning that if the CM is removed, a like situation may arise in the state. The authors of the report count this by saying that the Congress Jayaprakash Narayan today to turn it into a political movement. It is further argued by them that in 1974 the call in Gujarat was for the removal of Mrs Indira Gandhi whereas today the demand is only for the removal of Solanki. Ignoring the demand even as the situation in the state deteriorates it could ultimately entail a similar demand being raised against Rajiv Gandhi. In addition it is also said in the report that the ministerial team of Madhavsingh Solanki is not capable enough to rescue Gujarat from the morass it is in today. The high command has taken note of all these points raised in the report and is keeping a close watch on the state. Solanki has gone back to Gujarat on a trial period. If he fails to deliver the goods the centre could act on the report's recommendation.

A major complaint has been made about the Kshatriya Sabha in the report. The convention was allegedly organised by Madhavsingh Solanki in Limbupur near Baroda on 2 June. It was addressed by Ishwar Singh Chavda, the father in law of Madhavsingh Solanki and a Member of Parliament. The others who were present included Amar Singh Rathwa, Ajit Singh Dhabu, Natwarsingh Solanki—all MPs—and Mahendrasingh Chauhan, a local MLA. According to reports, a *Shashtra Puja* was performed at this Sabha. Mahendrasingh



PM Rajiv Gandhi with home minister S B Chavan unhappy

Chauhan held a sword while those present pledged that it was only the right of the Kshatriya to rule the land and that Gujarat's heritage came from Karansinh Waghela (ruler of the last Kshatriya dynasty of Gujarat). Not only did the members of the Sabha display an unbridled Kshatriya chauvinism, but they also issued a challenge to the central leadership of the Congress(I). Said Mahendrasinh Chauhan, the Congress(I) MLA "We constitute 52 per cent of the state's population. We have solely been instrumental in putting the Congress(I) in power. The Congress survives because of Kshatriya votes." The centre has taken particular note of this meeting.

Madhvasinh Solanki had arrived in New Delhi to take part in the information ministers' meeting during which he launched another attack on the press, which according to him, is at the root of the problem in Gujarat. He demanded "firm controls on the press in the larger public interest" and alleged that everytime there were signs of normalcy in his state "some section of the press had excited public passions." He went on to suggest that the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) should not "encourage" such newspapers or journals. On the other hand, in Gujarat, his state machinery was busy bringing down the worst kind of repression on the Gujarat press which virtually amounted to arbitrary censorship.

During the last few weeks the information department of the Gujarat government had taken it upon itself to dictate to the press what it should and should not do. When the press refused to budge, the government resorted to brute force. On 10 June, policemen flaunting a hand written order of the Gujarat government reached the office of the *Indian Express* at 4 am and seized copies of *Jansatta*, the Gujarati daily of the Express group from the press. They also prevented hawkers from taking copies of the newspapers for distribution.

Much of Madhvasinh Solanki's annoyance with the press emerges from the fact that it has refused to be browbeaten. Unfortunately for him, the Gujarat press dutifully reported all that has been happening in the state ever since the beginning of the anti reservation agitation. It has also exposed people close to Solanki. A recent example is its detailed coverage of the Mrugesh Jaikrishna affair.

And what has happened in Gujarat in the last four months other than violence and repeated violence? The



Elephants leading the banned Rath Yatra procession in Ahmedabad; breaking the barricade

toll in June alone was close to 50. Hundreds were injured in incidents that took place day after day, almost as if there was no authority that could check them: bomb explosions, stabbings, arson, carnage, rioting, firing by both the police and the army. Gujarat continues to slip into disaster. The state has not seen a normal day's life for months on end. Curfew has remained in force most of the time, schools and colleges have been shut. The administration, which till today runs from its camp office in the Ahmedabad Circuit House, has been unable to reverse the tide of violence. The government is struck with partial paralysis, a section of the employees are not reporting for work. In protest even business and commerce have come to a virtual standstill. In the first week of June nearly 45 trade and business organisations of Gujarat decided to go on strike to protest against the failure of the Solanki government to control the law and order situation. The number of such organisations soon swelled to 100 and business all over the state came to a grinding halt. Later, in the middle of June, the municipal employees of Ahmedabad began a civic stir in protest against the policies of the Solanki government. Huge sections of the population have risen in revolt, because Solanki has proved ineffective. Months after the worst spells of recent violence broke out in March and April, he has not even succeeded in restoring the confidence of the peo-

ple affected by the riots. Five thousand poor, benighted people in Ahmedabad city still live in relief camps. And when the press reports all this, Solanki charges it with "siding with vested interests." What is more, he retaliates with steps reminiscent of the dark days of the Emergency.

Thus far, the centre has allowed Solanki to have his way in Gujarat. Indeed, the central leadership including Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and union home minister S B Chavan have come out in favour of Solanki.

But certain recent developments suggest that the centre may be taking a second look at Solanki. One is the appointment of a five member panel of senior Congress(I) leaders to set things right in Gujarat. This clearly reflects Rajiv Gandhi's lack of confidence in Solanki. Otherwise he would not have taken the unprecedented step of appointing a committee invested virtually with the powers of Gujarat's chief minister. The inclusion of two chief ministers—Narayan Dutt Tewari of Uttar Pradesh and Hardeo Joshi of Rajasthan—in the committee itself indicates the seriousness of the situation in Gujarat. Obviously the problems of Gujarat are important enough to take precedence over those of UP and Rajasthan. And it should serve as a clear evidence of Solanki's dwindling stock with the centre.

Sanjiv Kumar, New Delhi

In Defence of Reservations

Jinabhai Darji stages a comeback with his Anamat Samarthan Samiti

For four long months, Jinabhai Darji, one time political mentor of the Gujarat chief minister, Madhavsingh Solanki kept a low profile, even as his former disciple was in dire straits over the anti reservation stir. In 1981 when the first anti reservation agitation had been defused and defeated Mr Darji, a vocal supporter of the backward classes had led a counter campaign on behalf of Mr Solanki. His silence this time seemed ominous to many of his own supporters, although everybody knows there is no love lost between him and the CM anymore. Then on 5 June Mr Darji sent a letter to 165 people, including Sarvodaya workers, social workers, trade union leaders and others inviting them for a convention in Ahmedabad on 16 June to defend the reservation policy.

The convention aroused considerable interest because last month Mr Darji had sent a telegram to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi urging him to impose President's rule in Gujarat to end the prolonged social strife. On 2 June the Kshatriya clansmen of Mr Solanki had convened a meeting at Laximpur near Baroda to pledge their support to the CM and his policies but the effort backfired. The Khatris, a martial people who form about 41 per cent of Gujarat's 34 crore population were preparing to launch a counter offensive which could lead to a caste war in the villages. The convention was attended by several Kshatriya Congress(I) MPs and legislators including Ishwarbhai Chavda MP and father-in-law of the chief minister.

Against this backdrop, the convention took place at Mr Darji's Khet Parishad Bhavan, a stone's throw from the historic Sabarmati Ashram of Gandhiji. It was decided that the Gujarat Anamat Samarthan Samiti, an organisation for the defence of reservations would be formed. Talking to SUNDAY later, Mr Darji said that the organisation would start functioning in about a month's time. He appealed to the members of the upper castes who are in favour of reservations for the backward classes, to come forward and pay Rs 101 and join the committee. Members of the backward communities who join the committee will have to pay a

day's earnings as fees. Asked why he had kept a low profile, the 65 year old leader from south Gujarat said he had deliberately done so because in 1981 when he had spoken up for the backward classes he had been accused of starting a caste conflict. And now that the government has made its stand clear he can express his opinions.

His reference was to the Gujarat government's unilateral announcement to put off the proposed 18 per cent hike in the quota of reservations for the socially and economically backward classes (SEBC) till a national consensus was evolved on the issue of reservations and to initiate a judicial probe headed either by a High Court or Supreme Court.



Darji, Solanki's bugbear

judge into the violence of the past four months. The decision followed an appeal by the Nagrik Sangathan, a citizens' forum that includes the elite like the poet Iqbal Masihankar Joshi, to both the government and the anti reservation stir to come together and put an end to the stir. Although the government has made these concessions, the agitators have not come to the negotiating table.

Mr Darji's convention witnessed angry speeches by leftist workers such as Girish Patel and Achyut Yagnik and by the Dalit Panther leader, valji Patel. Mr Darji's statement in which he had allegedly implied that there is some justification for the opposition to reservations by

the economically backward upper caste people.

Mr Darji had mooted this point, rather obliquely, in April when he had said in Surat that reservations would have to stay for the uplift of the backward classes. However, some adjustments would have to be made in view of the socialistic pattern of our society to ensure that the economically weaker sections also prospered. The anti reservationists too have been harping on the need to adopt economic backwardness as one of the criteria for the reservation policy.

Even though Mr Darji said that his views were only tentative, the anti reservationist immediately agreed with him. While opponents of the chief minister pointed out that a die hard protagonist of the reservation policy like Mr Darji could also see the need to help the poor in the non backward classes, Mr Darji's supporters said that too much was being read into his remarks.

Sanat Mehta, former finance minister, and a staunch supporter of Mr Darji, said at the convention that the backward classes would have to regroup if they wanted to defend the reservation policy. He stressed that the Anamat Samarthan Samiti would have to fight for its preservation when the national consensus is evolved or when the constitutionally approved policy came up for review in 1989-90.

Political circles assert that Mr Darji and his supporters are revamping their 1980 KHAM platform which had welded together the have nots, Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims. The KHAM theory had spectacular success both during the 1980 and 1985 elections. However, Mr Darji and his supporters were denied tickets by the high command for the 1985 Assembly election. Mr Darji is now planning to cut out Mr Solanki and his followers from this new platform of the have nots. Significantly, although he had repeatedly said he was not interested in entering the political scene, Darji had invited different party workers to the 16 June convention. If the Anamat Samarthan Samiti gets going now it will be a force to reckon with by 1990, when the general elections will be due once more.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

The Case of the VIP's Son

Adil Shahryar, son of Mohammad Yunus, a friend of the Nehru-Gandhi family, was jailed for felony in the USA. President Reagan set him free—as a gesture of goodwill towards India. SANKARSHAN THAKUR reports on how he got his freedom.

Adil Shahryar flew back to India almost unnoticed on 15 June, after having served a little over three of a 35 year sentence in American prisons. The only son of Trade Fair Authority of India's (TFAI) chairman Mohammad Yunus, Shahryar had been convicted on five charges including fraud and felony and awarded a 35 year prison term by Justice J.W. Kehoe of the United States Federal Court of the southern district of Florida. But President Ronald Reagan, in a rare gesture, scrawled his signature on the order of executive clemency and Shahryar was a free man. The date on the order of clemency embossed with a golden seal of the office of the President of the United States, was 11 June 1985—the day the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, arrived in Washington to begin his tour of the United States. The Yunus family's links with the Nehru-Gandhi household are well known and this led opposition leaders to allege that Rajiv Gandhi had himself gone and pleaded with the American President for the release of Adil Shahryar. The Lok Dal chief, Charan Singh, said that Shahryar had "obviously been released at the request of Rajiv Gandhi" and he questioned the "discrimination shown in the case of Adil Shahryar". A few days later Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna commented that the release of Adil Shahryar was an "American gift to India." The Prime Minister, however, flatly denied such allegations on his return to India. Visibly irritated when asked about Shahryar, the PM told reporters at a press conference at Palam airport that he had not pleaded with anyone for the release of Adil Shahryar, adding that the Indian government takes up the case of every Indian citizen.

Adil Shahryar, apart from being an Indian citizen, is also the son of a father who wields enormous influence, a point which, even the memorandum dated 13 February 1985 and sent by the Indian embassy in Washington to the United States state department pleading for Adil Shahryar's clemency, does not fail to stress. "He (Adil Shahryar)," says a part of the 12 page memorandum, "is

the son of Mohammad Yunus, who held important positions in the government of India, such as ambassador to Algeria, consul general in San Francisco, Prime Minister's special envoy and head of diplomatic missions in several countries. The petitioner's mother is also a highly educated lady who has held several responsible positions in teaching institutions and government." The memorandum then goes on to plead the case of Adil Shahryar on various counts.

Earlier the Federal Court of Florida had indicted Shahryar on five grounds:

- An attempt to place an explosive in a vessel of foreign registration in violation of 18 USCS 2775. The sentence: 15 years in jail,
- using an explosive to commit a felony to wit: wire fraud in violation of 18 USCS 1343. The sentence: five years in jail,
- making a false statement to the United States government contained in a shipper's export declaration in violation of 18 USCS 1001. The sentence: five years in jail,

- making a firebomb in violation of 26 USCS 5822, 5861(F), 5871 and 18 USCS 2. The sentence: five years in jail,

- wire fraud in violation of 18 USCS 1343. The sentence: five years in jail.

The memorandum of the Indian embassy in Washington attempts to counter all five charges. They presented a case saying that for most of the charges there were no evidence. And in any case there was no damage to any ship or other property. In other words, it was as Adil Shahryar put it, a "hairbrain" scheme, a set up. See interview. It is further concluded in the memorandum, for example, that the sentence of 15 years for an alleged attempt to place an explosive on a foreign vessel is remarkable in view of the fact that no vessel was in the port nor was any vessel damaged. Regarding the manufacture and placement of two firebombs in the container which was to have been on the ship sailing from Miami to London, Shahryar pleaded that he could never have been linked with it as he had no access to the container in question. On the allegation that Shahryar made a false statement to the US government in a shipper's export declaration, the memorandum holds the view that Shahryar could not have done this as "the declaration was made by an employee of the Sentry Air Freight (a freight forwarding company in Miami)" and that he (Shahryar) himself "neither signed nor dictated its contents, nor was he given a copy of it".

The memorandum also picks on other points to make a case of an "unjustified" and "unduly severe" sentence. It says that Shahryar was not afforded speedy trial as mandatory under section 3161(B) of the Speedy Trial Act. The memorandum also maintains that Adil Shahryar was not given an opportunity to gather evidence in his favour because he was all throughout in jail. One of the reasons it gives for the consideration of the clemency petition is that Adil Shahryar "did not have a counsel to represent him on the federal charges until 13 January 1982".



Adil Shahryar

Adil Shahryar owned a corporation known as the Caribbean International Investments Inc in the United States, which dealt mainly with the import and export of goods. In 1981, he entered into a contract with M/S Shapton Products, a London-based company, for the supply of 25,000 video tapes at a cost of 2,43,750 dollars (about Rs 21,93,750). On 3 August the same year, Caribbean International Investments obtained a letter of credit for the same amount from the American Express Banking Corporation of New York. The condition for granting the letter of credit was that the shipment of 25,000 video tapes to Shapton Products had to be made by 30 August 1981.

Then, says Shahryar, he contacted Bill Hill, executive vice-president of "3M," manufacturers of video cassettes, through Dick Lawson, who was one of Shahryar's employees. He placed an order for the supply of the required number of video tapes and "relied upon Lawson and Hill to ensure that the consignment be ready for shipment by the due date." In the meantime, Shahryar also went to Sentry Air Freight and arranged for a 20 feet long container to be sent from Miami to London. He then ordered 4000 pounds of IBM cards—part of an additional consignment—from a company called the Sunshine Recycling Warehouse and requested Sentry Air Freight to have a container sent to Sunshine Warehouse where the IBM cards could be loaded. Thus, pleads Adil, once he had placed the order, he could not have had anything to do with the container at all. The matter was between Sentry Air Freight and Sunshine Recycling Warehouse.

The story of Adil Shahryar actually began on 27 August 1981 when he was "invited to the Sheraton Beach Hotel in Miami by Lawson and Hill and told by them that as timely delivery of the cassettes could not be ensured, they proposed to bring a damaged container which would not be accepted by the ship and that, in this way, the contract could be kept alive." Adil Shahryar says that he "opposed the design" of Hill and Lawson but why then did he not inform the police of it?

Two days later, on 29 August 1981, the hotel where Shahryar was staying caught fire. Adil Shahryar was arrested on charges of setting fire to the hotel but he alleges that it was Lawson, who he thinks was an "FBI informant," who did the mischief. In April 1983, Shahryar was acquitted of the charge of setting fire to the hotel in the absence of any evidence. But by this time, the FBI

Advantage Foreigner

Are Indian courts supposed to take a lenient view of the crimes committed in India by foreigners? The memorandum submitted to the United States department of state by the embassy of India in Washington suggests such a measure. To quote from the memorandum: "The practice of the Indian courts in respect of convicted foreigners, including American citizens, has been to impose a light sentence and order curtailment of their visas so that they may return to their own countries rather than be condemned to spend long periods in prison in an alien environment. This practice is followed even in the case of those convicted of serious offences, including dealing in narcotics and those with a past criminal record..." The memorandum was submitted to the US state department on 13 February 1985. Around the same time, Charles Sobhraj, a French national, was completing his seven-year prison term in India.

The Lok Dal leader, H.N. Bahuguna, commenting on the government's role in getting Shahryar released, said, "It makes India look small in our own eyes." He pointed out that despite government denials the fact was that the Indian

embassy had pleaded Shahryar's case in its memorandum No. WAS/CONS415/46/81 dated 13 February 1985. "The Prime Minister being the external affairs minister is responsible for this," said Bahuguna. Bahuguna asked the government to secure the release of Indians in Pakistani jails as also the Indians in West Asian jails, who had been acquitted by courts, but their cases had not been taken up with the concerned authorities.

It may be recalled that in the past, efforts had been made for the release of Adil Shahryar by unofficial channels. Some years back the Qaladhari brothers of Dubai had offered their good offices. The release of Shahryar having coincided with the date of Rajiv Gandhi's arrival in Washington has certainly raised some embarrassing questions. Firstly, will the government of India in future also plead for Indians placed in similar predicament? Also, with terrorist threats persisting, if a foreign national commits some untoward act in India, will the courts be expected to impose a light sentence, as suggested by the Indian embassy in Washington?

Shubhbrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

had framed other charges against him relating to the shipment of the video cassettes to London. And in this case, the operative part seems to have been the date 30 August 1981 on the expiry of which the letter of credit of 2,43,750 dollars given by the American Express Banking Corporation of New York to Shahryar's firm would not have held good. Shahryar's firm had been unable to ship the consignment of video cassettes by that date. On the pier of the Miami port lay a container full of paper and, according to the investigation conducted by FBI agent Neahls, two firebombs contained in five-gallon plastic jugs which Adil himself had bought. Further the FBI investigations also found timing mechanisms attached to the plastic jugs. The FBI also found an agreement for the shipment of video cassettes from Sentry Air Freight as also a note from the apartment of Adil Shahryar's roommate, which read: "August 31 Day-1, Maduro Lines, Ludwingshafen." Ludwingshafen is the name of the ship on which, the prosecution said, the container with the fire-

bombs was sought to be loaded. On this evidence, they built up a case of fraud and felony against Shahryar. They said that he had the opportunity to place the firebombs in the container, even though the transportation had been handed over to the freight firm, because "the appellant had the necessary access as he was a customer of the paper company."

The petition on behalf of Adil Shahryar, however, disputes this evidence. Adil admits he bought the plastic jugs but says that he did so at the instance of Dick Lawson. Adil admits that there was an agreement for the shipment of video cassettes but says it was not an invoice. Further, his contention is that the note which records the departure of the cargo-ship Ludwingshafen was not written by him. A most pertinent point that the petition raises time and again in Shahryar's favour is that, since there was no damage to any ship or property the sentence pronounced on Adil was unjustified. In American criminal law however, an attempt to commit criminal offence

is sufficient ground to punish a person.

Even if there is substance in Adil Shahryar's assertions, several questions remain unanswered. Why did not Shahryar inform the police when he knew on 27 August 1981, that Hill and Lawson were doing something illegal? When he knew that the video cassettes could not be procured by 30 August, the last date of shipment, why did his company not call off the shipment order? Why was the container with the firebombs sitting on the pier? And yet another important question: If, as Adil Shahryar maintains, he had been wrongly implicated and the prosecution's case was full of loopholes, why did he not appeal to the Supreme Court, instead of seeking executive clemency from the President of the United States?

Supreme Court senior advocate Ram Panjwani, Adil Shahryar's Indian counsel, who made nearly half a dozen trips to the United States to get his client released, says that legal opinion in the United States maintained that it would have been better to seek executive clemency rather than appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. Incidentally, Shahryar's appeal against the jail sentence in the Federal Court of Appeal, 11th Circuit, had already been rejected in 1983.

On 1 May 1984 fresh efforts began to bring Shahryar out of American jails when Ram Panjwani filed a petition for executive clemency in the office of David C. Stephenson, an attorney in the department of justice of the United States administration. Subsequent to that, the help of influential persons both in the United States administration and the government of India was sought. Archibald Roosevelt, grandson of President Roosevelt, was of great help as also the director (international relations) of the Chase-Manhattan Bank Inc. A former US ambassador to India also helped out in the case. "Some of the officials in the United States administration," said Ram Panjwani, "were very helpful." On the Indian side, top officials, ministers included, lost no opportunity to remind their counterparts in the United States to "keep in mind" the

case of Adil Shahryar. On one occasion, it is reliably learnt, P.V. Narasimha Rao, then the external affairs minister, had personally talked to the United States secretary of state, George Shultz, about it. And then, finally in February 1985, the Indian embassy in Washington took up the case and forwarded a long petition in favour of Shahryar to the US state department.

Beg Your Pardon

Adil Shahryar was sitting out his 35-year sentence in the maximum security prison in Leavenworth, Kansas, when the message from the US President arrived.

According to the terms of his sentence, he was not eligible for parole until 30 August 1991. He was imprisoned for very serious crimes. But the US President, Ronald Reagan, set all that aside when he granted Mr Shahryar's petition for executive clemency and formally commuted his sentence to the time already served since 17 May 1982.

Was it justice or politics which prompted Mr Reagan to set Mr Shahryar free? The White House, department of state, and the department of justice are all silent on this issue. Aware that Mr Shahryar's release has stirred a controversy in India, US government officials have been quick to point out that Mr Shahryar first filed a petition for an executive grant of clemency on 1 May 1984—over a year ago—and that the petition went through all the routine channels. It was received by the US pardon attorney, who reviewed the case, gathered all the relevant information and then submitted it to the US deputy attorney general, who eventually forwarded the case to the White House for the President's consideration. What US officials fail to point out, however, is that executive clemency for prisoners is rare in the United States, especially under an administration which came in to office pledging to be "tough on crime." In fact, since Mr Reagan has entered office, 726 requests for commutation of sentences have been received. But the President has granted only 13.

Moreover, Mr Shahryar was no ordinary prisoner. The son of one of Mrs Gandhi's close advisers, he had the force of the Indian government arrayed behind him. While embassies normally assist their citizens who are caught in the legal system of another country, the Indian embassy in Washington went to extraordinary lengths to aid Mr Shahryar and followed his case closely, consulting both Mr Shahryar and US government officials. In fact, the embassy wrote an extensive brief which was submitted to the department of justice in support of Mr Shahryar's petition for clemency. It also wrote to the

department of state on Mr Shahryar's behalf. The Indian officials argued that in India, foreigners convicted of serious crimes are usually given light sentences and allowed to leave the country.

The nature of the recommendation made by the US pardon attorney to President Reagan after reviewing Mr Shahryar's case, is not clear: such recommendations are kept confidential. He may have agreed with the Indian embassy that Mr Shahryar had been framed—that the two American businessmen, Dick Lawson and Bill Hill, who, Mr Shahryar claims, were supposed to provide him with the tapes, were the real perpetrators of the fraud, and that Mr Shahryar was an innocent in the game. (The two Americans supposedly disappeared without a trace). But it is noteworthy that the US President's commutation of sentence was not a "pardon". It merely says that Mr Shahryar had served enough time for the crime he committed.

Regardless of Mr Shahryar's guilt or innocence, it seems likely that without the Indian government's backing and Mr Reagan's munificence, Mr Shahryar might have languished in prison for many more years. He would have been eligible for parole in 1991, but "good behaviour" counts in parole decisions, and Mr Shahryar had shown himself to be an abusive and unruly prisoner. In fact, Mr Shahryar was transferred from the medium-security facility in El Reno, Oklahoma to the maximum security US penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas, last May, for "disciplinary" reasons.

In the US, Mr Shahryar's case has drawn little attention. One official with the US Bureau of Prisons sounded bitter about Mr Shahryar's reprieve. Though he chose his words carefully because of the clamp of secrecy, he repeatedly drew parallels with the case of Patty Hearst, the heiress to the Hearst fortune who was convicted for her role in an armed bank robbery committed by the Symbionese Liberation Army. A controversy had erupted when President Jimmy Carter granted her a commutation of sentence. It was alleged that money and influence had won over justice.

Sharon Butler, Washington

"I Am Innocent"

Adil Shahryar told SUNDAY

Q How many jails did you go to in the United States?

A: Altogether five. First at Miami. Then Georgia, Oklahoma, Missouri and finally Kansas.

Q: Were you released from Kansas?

A: Yes.

Q: You have made various complaints about your treatment in American jails...

A: Yes, it was a harrowing experience. Jails are universally bad, no matter where they are, but in my case, they were deliberately subjecting me to a great deal of harassment. But I was convinced in my mind that I was innocent and that, in this case, there was a miscarriage of justice. I used my time in jail to obtain a lot of evidence against my false conviction and I instituted 17 lawsuits in different district courts, appellate courts and the Supreme Court of the United States and I sent many complaints to the justice departments...

Q: What happened to all those complaints?

A: They are all pending. They would be moot now because I have been released; I intend to sue the responsible officials for deliberate acts of deception which are on the record.

Q: What are the acts of deception?

A: When I was arrested the FBI lied to the judge about my custody. They told her that I was abroad, that I was to be found and brought before her. Therefore she justified the million dollar bond which kept me in prison for seven months without a hearing. And during the time I was in prison, they were fabricating charges against me, stealing my property, helping the informants to ransack my office, and issuing search warrants that were completely baseless. This was nothing short of harassment. The officials knew they were wrong and they withheld this in the trial because this was part of their conviction (case). The strategy of my attorney and the prosecutor was to coerce me to plead guilty. In my case, they wanted me to provide information to the FBI about the criminal activities of those I was accused of aiding and abetting.

Q: Who are they?

A: One of them is an FBI informant. I had no idea because I did not aid and abet him. He did everything; he was really stealing everything from my business but the police

fabricated a story that I was attempting to set fire to a ship and that I have set fire to a hotel and that I had committed all kinds of frauds. These were senseless and baseless charges. I would not have pleaded guilty to anything so atrocious.

Q: What are the facts of the case, as you put it?

A: Nothing. Nothing happened to anything. I was arrested for setting fire to the hotel...

Q: Which hotel?

A: This was the Sheraton Hotel in Miami. This informant sprinkled some lighter fluid on my hotel door and raised an alarm. It trapped me in my room, because there was a lot of smoke and commotion. He used that as a cover to steal some documents and money out of my bag. Then this policeman accused me of setting fire to the hotel—an absolutely prepost-

During the time when I was in prison they (the FBI) were fabricating charges against me, stealing my property, helping the informants to ransack my office, and issuing search warrants that were completely baseless.

erous charge! I was also accused of possessing counterfeit money. The charge was based on his submitting a xerox copy of a hundred dollar bill which he claims he found in my car. It was no more than a xerox copy. He brought further charges of fraud against me because he was stealing cheques from my company and taking goods from my suppliers by forging signatures. They tried to prosecute me with some of these cheques. But, when produced in court, the judge suppressed them as being forged. Because of my ineffective counsel and lack of proper defence, they were getting away with all this. They obtained the conviction by merely keeping me in prison.

Q: Who was keeping you in prison then?

A: I was in FBI custody and it was

virtually a case of holding a man to ransom.

Q: But what did they want out of you? Why would they be interested in holding you unnecessarily?

A: They wanted a conviction to cover up the tracks of this informant who had provided false information about criminal activity. There was no criminal activity in this case. The FBI informant gave them information which was used in court to convict me. They tried to paint me as a man from India who tried to set fire to the hotel.

Q: What were you doing at the hotel?

A: I was there on business and had checked in with my "visa" card. This policeman arrested me on a bogus charge of setting fire to the hotel, but I was acquitted by the court. In fact, the hotel did not even bring a complaint against me.

Q: So what was this 35-year sentence for?

A: Setting fire to a ship. The jury found me guilty of setting fire to a ship. It is a complete miscarriage of justice. There was no fire, just some smoke in a container and a plastic jug which they alleged was a bomb, because it could have been a bomb.

Q: Where was this ship?

A: The ship was on a regular run from Miami to London. The allegation was that this container would have gone on that ship if certain things had happened. It was a gigantic cargo ship. This container, booked through my company, would have gone on that ship. However, the tapes (to be transported) had not been delivered. I had not booked the containers nor had my company. It had some papers in it, and was waiting to be loaded. According to FBI's theory, had the container been put next to some explosives and caught fire, the ship would have exploded.

Q: There were some IBM cards in the container.

A: It was taken for granted wrongly that the cards in the container had something to do with the making of a bomb. This man had placed an order for IBM cards which I had executed and put in the container, only because the container was available for storage purposes. It was not meant to be exported at all. Because the FBI informant was their only source of information and evidence, they tried to piece together these titbits to build up this fairy tale that I

intended to set fire to the ship. Because my attorney coerced me to plead guilty to setting fire to the ship, there was no affirmative defence. We needed a defence to say that the government was involved in a conspiracy to violate my civil rights and that they had indulged in criminal acts to try and convict me on false charges.

Q: Why did you not get an affirmative defence?

A: The attorney refused to do that. He wanted me to plead guilty in exchange for deportation. He said at court that I am insane and that I want to plead guilty. Even the agreement which he drew up with the prosecutor said that I would cooperate with the FBI to apprehend the people who were actually FBI informants. This was done without my knowledge.

Q: But you did at one stage agree to that arrangement and wanted to plead guilty, did you not?

A: I agreed to it because, as per my attorney's advice that was the only way to get out of jail. But the judge turned it down in a court hearing. It was a two-hour hearing in which he examined every aspect of the agreement, cross-examined me about my willingness to plead guilty and finally rejected it. Thereupon I informed the judge that I did not wish to be represented by this attorney any more.

Q: But one thing I fail to understand. Why would they be after you? The police, the FBI and the judiciary. Why?

A: This is nothing new. The police there have a dragnet method. They commit a crime and just catch the first person they can lay their hands on. It is usually the guy who happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He may not be involved in the crime, but may know about it or may even be a victim of the crime. But he is the one they will harass to get information out.

Q: In your case, who committed the crime?

A: There was no crime. One of the reasons why President Reagan invoked the power of executive clemency is because there was no crime. It was all a figment of the prosecutor's imagination. One of the cases against me was that of mail fraud. It was a letter mailed by the bank to my firm on a legitimate transaction. Since they allege that I was trying to set fire to the ship, they concluded that I was involved in an illegitimate business. So this letter amounted to a mail fraud, therefore, a five year sentence. Same way they accused me for wire fraud. On finding blank forms in my office stating that the container would contain

video-cassettes, I was charged for false statement. The FBI argued that had the ship caught fire, it would have meant that there were no tapes in the container. So five more years. Another five years were added on the charge of attempting to make a bomb without licence, to set the ship on fire. The rest of the fifteen years was given to me for setting fire to the ship. Since none of this happened, they said it was an attempt. But an attempt can only be charged when something has happened. So they accused me of aiding and abetting.

Q: There were two persons whose names were mentioned in this connection, Lawson and Bill Hill. What happened to them?

A: Lawson was the FBI informant and Bill Hill was the executive of the company that was supplying the tapes. I do not know whether he was an FBI informant or not, but Lawson was one. Hill disappeared after my arrest. Lawson was in touch with the United States attorney before my arrest. They said that Lawson was going to provide information to the US attorney three days before my

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arrest. But since I was arrested by the state police, he did not have to come forward and testify. But my conviction on the charge that I was aiding and abetting does not hold water. It is totally null and void under American law. They could not produce the man whom I was supposed to be aiding and abetting. It was all bogus and that is where I am going to sue them. They cannot afford to harass people under the garb of a legitimate chargesheet, when it is full of holes.

Q: When are you going to file the suit?

A: I will do it as soon as I have consulted my counsel here. I am told that the best way to do it is in the Indian courts... on hindsight one realises that things could have been done in a different manner.

Q: As you say your conviction was not based on facts, why did you not file an appeal in the Supreme Court?

A: It would have been a very simple matter to go in front of a judge and have myself released.

Q: Why did you not do it in the first place?

A: Well, I could not do it. I was a prisoner. My attorneys could have done it. But they were so inundated with people who are in jail that they probably did not bother.

Q: Your parents and counsels here. They could have done it.

A: My parents were not really in a position to come to America and help me. But Mr Panjwani (Adil Shahryar's Indian counsel) had visited me immediately, and consulted lawyers, but it was all messed up.

Q: Now that you are back, what do you intend doing?

A: With this situation a few problems have come up. But I am going to try and approach some of my old projects and restore them. I was a small scale entrepreneur under the Delhi Finance Corporation. Of course if I have to pay penalty for all this period it will be impossible. But hopefully they will waive the penalty. So far the penalties amount to about Rs 20 lakhs.

Q: The Indian government has pleaded on your behalf and it is being said that it was the Prime Minister who clinched matters during his visit this time.

A: That is just idle gossip, a very absurd conclusion to make. The Indian Prime Minister is not involved and he made a clear statement too. The Prime Minister does not go around doing things like that. The Indian government and the American government make their own independent decisions.

Q: Was it only coincidence that you were released when the Prime Minister was there?

A: The whole conviction was so malicious that they might be trying to cover themselves up by showing that it is a political act, that they did not actually grant me clemency, but that it was only because of the Indian government...

Q: You mean they timed it to embarrass the Indian government?

A: I have no idea. I was just released.

Q: What were you told when you were being released?

A: I was arrested in the prison and charged with overstaying my visa. Then I was taken before the immigration judge and I pleaded guilty to that. Then they deported me.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

The Television Games

Doordarshan has been tailoring its programmes, apparently to serve vested interests

On Wednesday, 19 June, viewers of Doordarshan's national hook-up were surprised to find the popular BBC comedy *Are You Being Served?* back on the air. The programme had been abruptly discontinued on four previous Wednesdays. While on two occasions, it was substituted for coverage of the Prime Minister's foreign tour, on the other two days, a curtain-raiser on the Festival of India and a documentary film was shown instead. The sudden decision of Doordarshan to drop the serial sponsored by Campa Cola sparked off a bitter controversy.

Officials of the cold drink company point out that while Doordarshan had some justification in cancelling their telecast on two Wednesdays, the non-inclusion of the programme on two subsequent Wednesdays was "blatant discrimination." "How is it that the axe of Doordarshan fell on Campa Cola for four weeks? The agreement that Doordarshan has

with its sponsors is extremely one-sided and monopolistic," alleged Madanjit Singh, chief executive of Campa Cola. He said that the cancellation of the programme was a very serious matter for them. Firstly, the programme was taken off during the peak summer season when cold drinks sell and secondly, Doordarshan gave Campa Cola no prior notice that the telecasts were to be cancelled. What is worse, promotional announcements for the programme continued for four weeks over *Saptahiki* (on Saturdays) even after the programme had actually been withdrawn.

Could political overtones be read into Doordarshan's decision to drop *Are You Being Served?* for four weeks? According to the grapevine, the programme was dropped because the Campa Cola owner, Charanjit Singh, is no more in the good books of the Congress(I). There was speculation that he was leaving the party. While Charanjit Singh de-

clined to comment on the possible political motives behind Doordarshan's decision, the chief executive of the company who has written to the information and broadcasting ministry about Doordarshan's "unjustified action," stated that he was categorically told by senior officials at Doordarshan's office, at Mandi House, that they were "not interested in their (Campa Cola's) sponsorship."

The director general of Doordarshan, Harish Khanna, strongly defended Doordarshan's cancellation of *Are You Being Served?* for four weeks. "What we did was not intentional, it was accidental and would be avoided in future. The action was legitimate and necessary in view of the pressing needs of programmes of national interest like coverage of the Prime Minister's foreign tour. If such a situation arises again, I am afraid, I will react in the same way," he said. "All allegations of the decision being guided by political considerations



Divya Seth (left), Vinod Nagpal and V.M. Badola in a scene from *Humlog*

'Doordarshan is Not Selling Time'

Harish C. Khanna, director general, Doordarshan told *Frontline*

Q: There are allegations about Doordarshan resorting to discrimination while selecting sponsored programmes and succumbing to political pressures in the selection. Any comment?

A: There is absolutely no pressure at all. As far as discrimination is concerned, it is only that some producers are more enterprising than others. We examine each and every proposal in the order in which it is received. The element of judgment comes only while scheduling time for the programme. And here, let it be very clear that Doordarshan is not selling time. We are inviting programmes, not selling time and our sponsors are not paying time. We decided to have outside producers so that they could be our creative partners. I think this is a very false propaganda that is being unleashed against Doordarshan.

Q: Has there been any shift in policy for selection of commercial programmes recently, which has forced Doordarshan to turn down proposals of several companies and sponsors?

A: There has been no shift in policy. We only want programmes which suit us and are not prepared to buy a finished product lying in the market. We indicate the areas where new programming is required. We do not give any sponsor any guidelines for programming, but only indicate our spheres of preferences. For example, we have instructed agencies and producers not to make blood-curdling crime episodes, but all the same we have said a good Sherlock Holmes serial would be accepted. We want entertainment which is socially relevant.

Q: Why then does Doordarshan retain the prerogative to pull off a certain programme after it has been cleared for airing?

A: We have decided that if we clear 13 episodes at a time, we can always judge whether the series is limping or running. We still keep the option to pull off the programme from the air for some reason. There have been no complaints about this so far. About some programmes we have very serious reservations. In Simi Garewal's programme, for example (*It's a*

Woman's World), we were discussing taking it off the air when she herself decided to cancel all further episodes.

Q: Why is it that in spite of the popularity of some serials like *Show Theme* their contract has not been renewed?

A: *Show Theme* has run its full gamut. We told the producer to think of something else, and now she is coming up with a short story series called *Ek Kahani*.

Q: When *Mashoor Mahal* was pulled off the air there was a big controversy.

A: *Mashoor Mahal* again was approved for a specific number of episodes with a clear written indication that this is not the kind of programme that Doordarshan wants. About this programme there



Harish Khanna

were very strong opinions. We conducted two research studies on its popularity and even these studies showed that opinions were divided. Some found it inane and others entertaining. But there was nothing surprising about *Mashoor Mahal* going off the air. We had warned the sponsor that it was the type of programme that was not likely to be extended further.

Q: How is it when programmes like *Show Theme*, *Mashoor Mahal* and *Idhar Uthar* have not been extended, Doordarshan's own production, *Hum Log* has already aired 110 episodes and has not been pulled? Is this not discrimination?

A: *Hum Log* was designed as a soap opera which keeps going as the story progresses. There have been soap operas which have gone on for even two years. *Hum Log*

once we have seen a serial, we think the story is over. *Hum Log* is a serial, not a soap opera. I cannot say that *Hum Log* is a soap opera.

Q: When *Mashoor Mahal* was pulled off the air, there was a big controversy.

A: Allegations in this case are absolutely baseless. We have decided that the programme *Mashoor Mahal* had to be taken off because of other priority programmes. Why would a serial and programme be pulled and cancelled? What would it have to gain? To bring in the name of the client *Charan Singh* and all its ridiculousness.

The only thing that Doordarshan should have done (and I would like to go on record for this) is to have offered them some other alternative so that their continuity was maintained. The allegation of *Comptroller* that we were not offering them any other programme in addition to *Are You Being Served?* is false. We did offer them other serials. Even when *Mashoor Mahal* completed its full run we offered the agency (Lintas) other programmes and today they have several serials in the line.

The case of *Are You Being Served?* is simple. The programme was not taken off the air. Unfortunately, four episodes had to be taken off one after another. Had they not been consecutive nobody could have noticed. The programme is still open for them and we are not asking them to pay for the episodes that were not aired. I have always insisted that a programme should be a complete unit and should be presented in a form that can be taken off the air without any harm to the programme.

Q: The *Comptroller* has also suggested that the programme *Are You Being Served?* is a soap opera.

A: *Are You Being Served?* is a serial, not a soap opera. I cannot say that *Are You Being Served?* is a soap opera. I cannot say that *Are You Being Served?* is a soap opera.

Q: When *Mashoor Mahal* was pulled off the air, there was a big controversy.

are bogus and uncalled for. What would the Doordarshan gain out of such an action?" he protested.

This brings us back to the question—who will safeguard the interests of the sponsors on television? Is it fair for Doordarshan to possessively guard its rights to cancel and pull off any programme with disregard to the sponsor's own schedule and audience feedback? The case of *Are You Being Served?* is not the first occasion when Doordarshan has been blamed for discrimination and succumbing to pressures from advertisers. There have been a spate of other controversial decisions taken by Doordarshan regarding sponsored programmes which has shown Doordarshan that both the advertisers and the viewers demand an equal right to voice their views on what should be telecast.

The scrapping of one such sponsored programme *Mashoor Mahal* in January this year first led to a row between the sponsors and Doordarshan. The trailblazing TV quiz show produced for Hindustan Lever by the chief executive of Lintas, Alyque Padamsee came unstuck when Doordarshan refused to renew the contract with the sponsors after 26 instalments. While Doordarshan officials maintained that the quiz was a 'mere gamble' and a cheap gambit by the advertisers to attract participants by awarding prizes, Lintas demanded a further extension. They insisted that *Mashoor Mahal* was high on the popularity charts and had paved the way for other such quiz programmes. Things came to a head when Lintas inserted an advertisement in newspapers asking viewers: "Should *Mashoor Mahal* be taken off Doordarshan?". Though few readers realised the disguised danger of the opinion poll, for Doordarshan it was a warning that their sponsors are not going to take discontinuation or cancellation of programmes without a whimper.

Doordarshan officials point out that with limited sponsorship time, Doordarshan has been mobbed by prospective sponsors. According to some, there is such a deluge of sponsors that hundreds of serials are lying in the cans at Doordarshan offices in Delhi and Bombay. Exigencies of time permit Doordarshan to clear only a fraction of programmes for viewing. According to S.C. Garg, controller of programmes, Doordarshan, the selection is done by a systematic and extremely unbiased method in which there is no scope for discrimination or favouritism. He said: "What the sponsors do not realise is that even if a programme is



Shafi Inamdar (left) and Rakesh Bedi in *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi*

popular, it cannot be aired for ever. We have to ease out some programmes to give way to others. Which is the reason, he pointed out, why programmes like *Show Theme* and *Idhar Udhar* had to be taken off, in spite of opposition from viewers.

Fortunately for Doordarshan, some programmes which elicited a rather poor response from viewers were taken off by the sponsors themselves. Take the example of Simi Garewal's programme *It's a Woman's World* produced by Mudra Communications. Doordarshan had received scores of letters from viewers expressing their misgivings about the programme promoting an elitist and consumerist culture. Certain women's organisations demanded the cancellation of *It's a Woman's World* because it exposed the Indian woman to a westernised and over-sophisticated ethos. Just as Doordarshan was contemplating the discontinuation of the programme, Simi Garewal herself announced its withdrawal.

What most detractors of Doordarshan's commercial television policy point out is that, if there is a strict watch over the duration of sponsored serials, why does Doordarshan allow other programmes, including its own production *Hum Log* to continue interminably? *Hum Log* which had admittedly introduced to Indian television the concept of a home-made soap opera, has already run 110 episodes and is nowhere near conclusion. The popularity of *Hum Log* has dropped lately from the earlier high 83 per cent rating, because of an overdose of the programme which is

aired twice every week on prime time. The words of Harish Khanna (see interview) that *Hum Log* is soon to conclude may come as a relief to some who have protested over its long duration, though this may be a bitter disappointment to others for whom *Hum Log* became the ultimate in home entertainment. But what is important is that, if other sponsors and advertisers had not complained of discrimination against their programmes, it is possible that the Doordarshan's own production may have carried on for longer than even 200 episodes.

Complaints about corruption in the Doordarshan commercial service and political considerations playing a heavy role in the selection of programmes are yet to be sorted out. It is felt that recent transfers in Doordarshan have taken place because some officials were apprehended while accepting payments for programmes telecast. The political connections of artistes and producers of programmes which are considered "Doordarshan's favourites" including *Hum Log* are pointed out by some people who have been demanding that Doordarshan evolve a balanced and fair policy for programme selection. For the present, Doordarshan officials themselves admit the code of conduct is tilted in their favour and that they would not permit any interference from sponsors on selection of programmes. However, every action and selection by the directorate is being carefully watched by a captive and discerning audience and an enthusiastic yet critical band of advertisers.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

The Taming of the Press

A decade is not so long a time in the life of a nation as to consign to the limbo of history the much dreaded Emergency in the country declared by India Gandhi in June 1975. On its tenth anniversary this month the country has virtually erased from the Elysian fields of memory the chilling scare this short lived aberration left behind in the country's body politic. The reactions at that time encompassed a variegated spectrum ranging from anger disgust and fear to its subdued acceptance as a cursed blessing. History is replete with instances where even lesser political follies have lingered in public memory for longer periods. But the sting of the Emergency seems to have died out as suddenly as its enigmatic declaration.

Indian politics has reached an awakening of its own and anyone tinkering with it would come to grief. By and large it is a permissive system and if anyone entrusted with the task of defending the system attempts to subvert it he will have to pay dear.

The declaration of the Emergency by Mrs Gandhi was likened to the hijack of an aircraft by the pilot himself. Most opposition leaders threw parliamentary norms to the winds and resorted to frustrating legally elected state governments and the centre by illegal unconstitutional and unconditional means. The government was compelled to resort to an unorthodox method of dealing with an organised movement against a democratic political system. Agitators took to the streets and challenged the established and accepted parliamentary system in the country. Even if it is accepted that there was a serious threat to the integrity of India, was the Emergency the answer? Considering the measure of the challenge which included even inciting the army and the police to mutiny, what were the options left to the government charged by popular will to govern and hold the country together?

A flashback would vividly bring to mind the post midnight knock, followed by arrests of thousands of

Wilfred Lazarus, a journalist and for some time principal information officer of the government of India, was the general manager of the news agency Samachar which was formed during the Emergency by combining the two principal news agencies in the country.

political opponents and others throughout the country on 25-26 June 1975. This spread a sense of revulsion while the government media tried to make out that the Draconian measures taken by the government were meant to maintain the stability of the country, threatened by unparliamentary methods adopted by the opposition to topple the duly elected government of Mrs Gandhi.

Unimaginative application of press censorship hindered the free flow of information regarding the truth of the situation in different parts of our



Abu on the press censorship during the Emergency

sprawling country. As it always happens in similar situations, rumour mills worked overtime. Horrifying reports of ruthless implementation of family planning programmes in north Indian states added a tragic dimension to the gripping panic, thereby creating a claustrophobic nightmare.

Free flow of information on the actual situation and better communications could have helped to defuse the situation. But the actions of the government had the opposite effect. Immediately after the broadcast by Mrs Gandhi on the morning of 26 June 1975, officers of the Press

Information Bureau moved into the offices of the news agencies and newspapers in New Delhi. They were like babes in the wood without any clear cut instructions on the types of information to be censored. In such an ambivalent situation, the censors in their amateur exercise thought it was safer to withhold copies rather than speedily clear them. This black out of information in the first few hours led to a clamour for news from the newspapers to the news agencies, especially the Press Trust of India, which has a contract to supply 60 000-80 000 words to its subscribers. After a couple of days censors were withdrawn from the news organisations and all press organisations were required to submit copies to the chief censor's office set up in the Press Information Bureau. This led to an avoidable delay and a greater mortality of news items. So wayward was the censorship that a foreign news item on an Indian actress being charged with shoplifting in London, was 'killed'. What this item had to do with violating the rules of an internal Emergency was beyond one's ken.

An editorial in the *New York Times* spoke of the improvement in the law and order situation in India in the wake of the Emergency but was critical of some of Mrs Gandhi's undemocratic ways. It was to be released by the Indian news agency in the Indian press. The censors ran the red pencil over the critical portion but wanted the complimentary references to be released. It was painstakingly explained to the censors that the whole editorial was an integrated copy and the suggested deletion would distort the thrust of the argument in the editorial. They would rather kill the whole story than allow an editorial criticism to be circulated. Although the copy carried the 'kill' mark of the censors, I referred it to the Prime Minister's office with certain comments and the copy was later released to the press in its original form.

At the height of the Emergency, a news item regarding George Fernandes was referred to the censors for clearance in the normal course. To the home ministry officials this was such a 'crime' that they wanted to know the name of the sub-editor who sent the copy to the censors. This incident created such a scare that many sub-editors and reporters

became chary of putting their initials on the copies.

In many centres outside Delhi, the district magistrates were acting as censors and they were very generous with their red pencils. Agency offices contented themselves with getting the copies killed rather than making an effort to have them cleared for circulation. As a result the wordage shrunk considerably and I had to instruct most of the Samachar offices in the country not to refer local items to censors but send them directly to Delhi where it was easier to secure the release of copies.

Looking back on the Emergency it is clear that Mrs Gandhi was trying to treat a chronic malady by administering a shock treatment. But Emergency certainly was not the answer, as in the name of tackling a situation, you cannot destroy the edifice. It is here that the relevance of the system comes in. The electorate which wields ultimate power in a democracy punished Mr. Gandhi and voted her out of power possibly because of a fear that a way of life was sought to be interfered with. A political folly can be punished only politically and Mrs Gandhi paid a very high price for it. But it is the

Looking back on the Emergency it is clear that Mrs Gandhi was trying to treat a chronic malady by administering a shock treatment. But the Emergency certainly was not the answer, as in the name of tackling a situation, you cannot destroy the edifice. It is here that the relevance of the system comes in... A political folly can be punished only politically and Mrs Gandhi paid a very high price for it.

innate strength of the Indian political system that the same electorate that voted her out returned her with in three years demonstrating its political maturity.

If the electorate was harsh on Mrs Gandhi it was equally harsh on the Janata leader. When internal squabbling within the Janata Party threatened the cohesion and stability of India they were unceremoniously thrown out of power.

What really softened their attitude towards Mrs Gandhi was the content of her socio-economic programmes launched during the Emergency.

When you are too close to an event, its impact is not fully felt. But with time people realised the genuineness of her programmes. Although the methods employed to implement some of the programmes were abhorrent and provoked much of the resentment leading to her overthrow, in the long run they were inclined to overlook some of her blemishes. As a good ruler feels the pulse of the people, she had no difficulty in tailoring her policies in step with public feelings and was able to twist an inconvenient situation to her advantage. This was her forte.



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SPECIAL REPORT

The Terms of Endearment

Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the West has been a personal triumph

Has the West been won? Following Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's penchant for one-word replies during his press conference at Washington's National Press Club, the answer is, yes. While welcoming Rajiv Gandhi on the White House lawns on 11 June, President Ronald Reagan noted the USA's "appreciation of India's non-alignment." Rajiv Gandhi may not have returned from the West with his bags full of arms or economic aid, but he has scored a tremendous political triumph. If the USA appreciates India's non-alignment and stops looking at India as a proxy for the Soviet Union, then a major hurdle in better Indo-US ties has been overcome.

In the past the Americans, for whom anything to do with Russia is like the red rag to the bull, have treated India as an unfriendly power because of the close ties between New Delhi and Moscow. The Indo-Soviet ties have not undergone any change, in fact, the Indian Prime Minister was candid while replying to a question, when he said that as of today "India feels closer to the Soviet Union." His frankness impressed the Americans. Washington was not expecting India to ditch the Russians overnight, just as it was not hoping that India would ask the Americans to change their stance towards Pakistan overnight. This was

a voyage of discovery. A voyage in which the possible meeting grounds were to be identified. The purpose was not to be merely pleasant to each other. The aim was to find ways to make the relations pleasant. The Rajiv Gandhi visit, according to American official statements, had generated unusual interest in the United States. The American establishment had given it the top billing for 1985. If media coverage can be considered a yardstick of the success of his visit, then the very fact that *The Washington Post* and the *New York Times* put Rajiv Gandhi on the front page with lead stories three days in a row shows the impact he made. Normally, the visit by the head of government of any country other than the USSR would not have evoked such a response. The young Prime Minister has scored a personal triumph in his western quest.

Two aspects of the visit stand out. One was the open appreciation of India's policy of non-alignment by President Reagan. As the chairperson of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), Rajiv Gandhi can take credit for being the first NAM leader to have extracted such a commitment from the Americans. In 1971, when the Indo-Soviet treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation was signed, the USSR expressed its

appreciation of non-alignment. Fourteen years later, the other super power, the USA, has done likewise. India is the only non-aligned country which has been able to make the two super powers agree to the existence of a non-aligned world apart from the power blocs respectively led by them. What Jawaharlal Nehru could not achieve and Indira Gandhi achieved partially has been accomplished by Rajiv Gandhi. The second aspect was the decision to rush foreign secretary Romesh Bhandari to Moscow soon after the Prime Minister finished his engagements in Geneva, his last stopover in the hectic tour. In doing so, while improving relations with the West, Rajiv Gandhi reassured India's traditional friends that India would not improve its relations with the United States at the cost of its ties with the Soviet Union. The fact that the visit of the foreign secretary took place on the eve of the Soviet-US talks in Washington and the United Nations sponsored indirect talks in Geneva on the Afghanistan question, also shows that the chairperson of NAM was taking his role as a peacemaker in the world seriously. There is no doubt that the two super powers are talking across the table on their own, but the role of an impartial mediator being played by India in this process is laudable.

Rajiv Gandhi addressing the US Congress: a standing ovation





At a reception in Paris: Rajiv Gandhi listens while former French premier Jacques Chirac reads out his address

Before embarking on the western quest, Rajiv Gandhi had successfully projected India's role in South Asia. By undertaking a joint trip to Bangladesh along with President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka and conducting a survey of cyclone affected Urii Char accompanied by the Sri Lankan leader and President Ershad of Bangladesh, Rajiv Gandhi had scored a diplomatic triumph. This move had shown that India was respected in the region and not shunned as the Pakistan lobby in the West would have preferred the projection to be President Zia of Pakistan visited Urii Char alone later. While the Indian Prime Minister was in the West, Pakistan kept up its belligerence on the borders, with reports of clashes on the Siachen glacier coming in almost daily during the visit. With its nuclear bomb having been a major point of discussion in Washington, the isolation of Pakistan in South Asia was perhaps the reason for the clashes. In the speeches made during the US visit and in the joint statement, the American administration has admitted that the government of India under Rajiv Gandhi "has taken steps to promote regional stability and cooperation." This is a major point scored during the visit. Now India has to rally round the other nations in this region against the threat of a nuclear Pakistan. Having taken the initiative on Afghanistan both during the USSR and the USA visits, Rajiv Gandhi has played his dual role as the chairperson of NAM and as the leader of India, the dominant regional power of South Asia.

The fact that the visit was fruitful is also evident from the joint statement issued moments before Rajiv Gandhi embarked on Air India's special aircraft, "Annapurna" on the

way to Geneva after his American tour. The statement could not be made ready until his Washington visit ended. The officials of the two countries had to thrash out many points in Washington while Rajiv Gandhi, accompanied by vice president George Bush, went to Houston to see the facilities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The very fact that both Afghanistan and Pakistan do not figure in the communique shows that where they did not agree, the Indian and American officials decided to sidestep. This can form the basis of future Indo American relations. It is not necessary for India and the USA with their distinct geopolitical environments and strategic viewpoints, to agree on everything. The world's largest democracy, India, and the most powerful democracy, the USA, have many things in common, which need not be clouded by sectarian considerations. In the long run, while India and the USA's strategic aims may undergo a change, the short term perspectives can have allowances for the respective present standpoints to be mutually respected.

The tone of the winning the West quest was set in Paris. The recent spy scandal had cast a pall of gloom over Indo French relations. At a reception hosted by the Indian ambassador to France, Rajiv Gandhi went out of his way to have a pleasant personal exchange with Serge Roidevaix, the French ambassador who had to leave Delhi after the spy scandal in January. While laying at rest all speculation about the spy scandal having affected Indo French relations, the young Prime Minister did not show any special consideration to the French in terms of arms deals. Yes, six more Mirage 2000 jets were

ordered. But these, along with the forty already purchased, were needed to complete two squadrons of the air force. The option to manufacture 80 Mirage aircraft which India had let lapse last year, was not revised. The purchase of 20 Dauphin helicopters for the proposed helicopter corporation (which will cater to the needs of civilian organisations like the Oil and Natural Gas Commission) was the only major deal pushed through during the French visit.

With the Americans having set unacceptable conditions, the possibilities of India acquiring some Howitzers from the French have brightened. The American M 198 gun is the best in its range, followed by the French, British, Austrian and Swedish 155 mm Howitzers. A decision on this Rs 1200 crore deal is expected to be taken in a few months, now that the western forays are over. While putting conditions for India, the Americans have not been able to explain why they are supplying naval armaments and mechanised arms for Pakistan, in the guise of Pakistan's threat from Afghanistan. None of these equipment can be used to counter a threat from Afghanistan. While the USSR is prepared to offer India MiG 29, a fighter aircraft which is yet to see service with the Warsaw Pact nations, and also offer a one billion rouble credit, the American reluctance to part with either armaments or high technology items for fear of the Russians having access to them in India cannot but keep India as a close friend of the Soviet Union. The success of the Prime Minister's western quest has been the ability to befriend America while giving Indo Soviet relations top priority, as evidenced by Romesh Bhandari's air dash to Moscow from Geneva.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

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Baldev/Photo Division captures
Prime Minister's visit to Egypt, F
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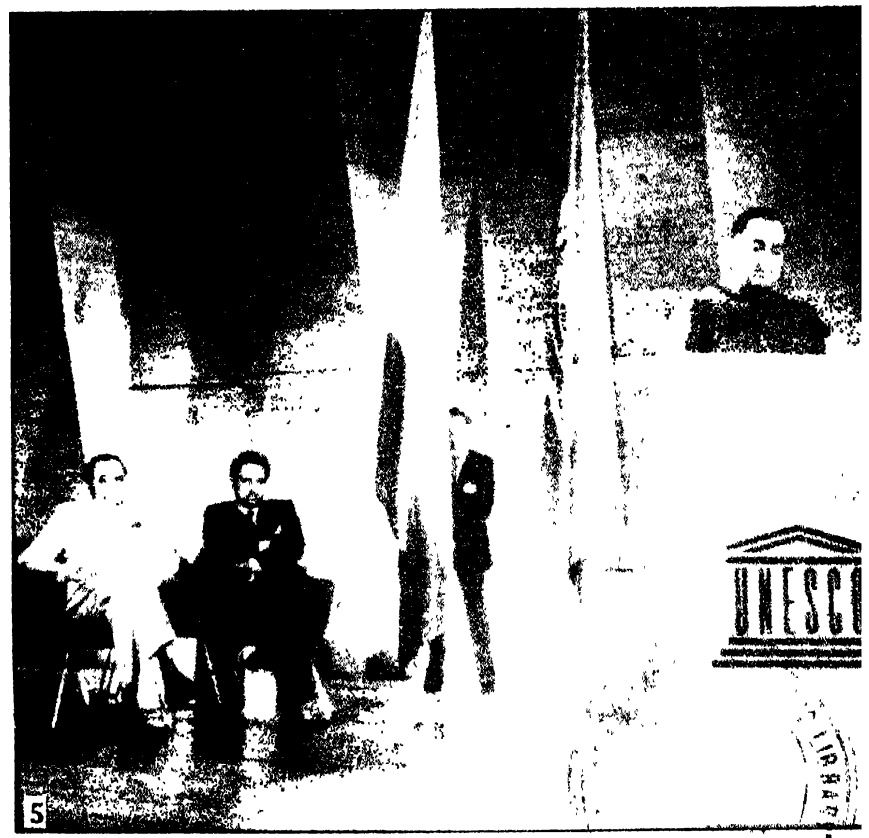
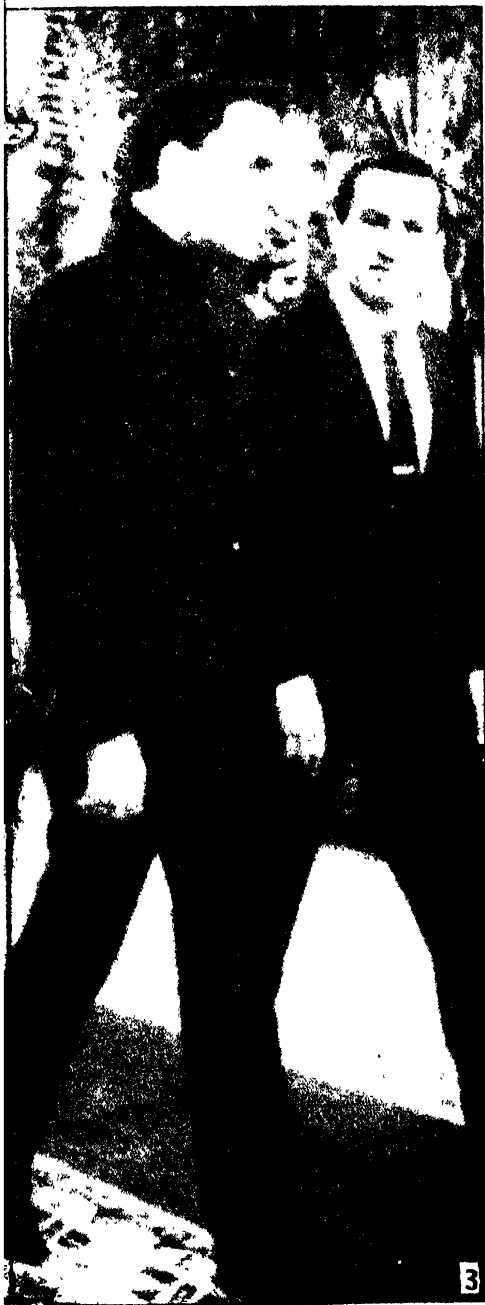


1 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi being received at the Elysee Palace Paris by French President Francois Mitterrand (in black coat) 2. Rajiv Gandhi with members of the Indian community in Cairo 3. Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi walking with the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his wife at the Qubbeh Palace in Cairo 4. Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi pose by a superfast train in Paris 5. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi addressing the UNESCO session in Paris



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6 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paying homage to the martyrs of Algeria in Algiers 7 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi with President Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan at White House Washington 8 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi inspecting the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) centre at Houston (USA) 9 Rajiv Gandhi at the controls of a spaceship simulator at the Orbital Training Facilities Houston 10 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi accepting the John Phillips Memorial Award on behalf of Indira Gandhi from the President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Geneva Switzerland.

How to Protect the Prime Minister

K F Rustamji, former director general of the Border Security Force, offers a blueprint for the PM's security

Protecting a Prime Minister should not normally be a very tough assignment. The task becomes tougher because every VIP thinks that he knows everything he needs to know about security. There are others who are certain that there can be no danger to the PM's life and any suggestion to the contrary often invites rebuke. A minister who has to get out of his car and walk to the entrance of the PM's residence always feels slighted. "Why me?" is often the refrain. Or a Congress boss who is asked to open his bag refuses to do so because the bag contains cash—and then the inevitable argument with the security personnel. An actor feels insulted when he is asked to identify himself. A journalist dislikes the suspicion with which his tape recorder is treated.

Once even Pandit Nehru felt offended. He walked out of one of the gates of his Teen Murti residence and tried to walk in through another. The sentry would not let him in because he could not recognise Nehru without the familiar cap on his

head. "I did not know he was completely bald," the sentry later explained.

The biggest risk to security is the politician or bureaucrat who knows nothing of security. According to him, the VIP himself knows what is best, and it would be imprudent to oppose his views however rash and casual they may be. He chooses to forget that India has a terrible history of assassinations. He does not know that in the last half century alone about a hundred men were killed all over the world including John and Robert Kennedy, Patrice Lumumba, Chancellor Dollfus, Mahatma Gandhi, Liaquat Ali Khan, Mujib ur Rehman, Tajuddin Ahmed, Zia ur Rehman, Dr Martin Luther King, Tom Mboya, King Idris, Bin Abdul Aziz, Anwar Sadat, Lord Louis Mountbatten and Mrs Indira Gandhi. Several others like Truman, Soekarno, Ford, Reagan and Margaret Thatcher escaped death miraculously.

In the first place, there should be no doubt about who is to shoulder the

responsibility for security. The protection of the Prime Minister is clearly the responsibility of the home minister and his ministry. The rules of security are framed by him and have to be followed everywhere in the country. The approval of the PM is just a formality. If the PM does not agree with anything that his security officers suggest, the security officer has the right to say that he would like to get the home minister's orders. Controversies seldom occur, but if they do the Prime Minister usually gives in to the advice of the home minister. The intelligence bureau has the responsibility of being the senior adviser and there is a hand-picked staff which watches the VIP almost every minute of the day. Though the government of India may send advisers and watchers when the PM goes out of the country, the state which the PM visits is responsible for his security.

Certain security arrangements may be extremely irksome to the Prime Minister since at times it can do some damage to his public image.



Commandos guarding the PM's car

Sanjay Shrivastava

It cramps his style, even endangers his political friendships. Yet security restrictions have to be observed. For instance, a most embarrassing situation can arise when an old woman is trying to move forward to see her 'God' with bleary shortsighted eyes and is pushed back roughly by a police constable in full public view.

Then there are other types of restraints too: The PM cannot have an outing with his children or go to the cinema, see a football match, go shopping in a bazaar. One VIP told me: "How I would love to go to a really crowded bazaar and just be pushed about by everyone. I love the smell of an overcrowded place and that jumble of faces." Another said: "You have to give up a lot. And somehow all that, even small things, make you wonder whether it is worth it."

Do we need all these policemen—was the constant complaint of Pandit Nehru. And quite often, if he had been insulted as he once was in Ahmedabad, he would take it all out on the security officer with a childish show of temper. Then when the aircraft reached Delhi, he would go up to him and say, "You messed your lunch. Come, have it with me."

Were there any attempts on the life of Pandit Nehru? Here is an account in his own words. "One day about the year 1930 or 1931 I returned from a tour by rail to Allahabad and a small crowd met me at the railway station. I noticed that a man was waving and dancing about with a large pair of scissors in a rather dangerous way. I walked past him; the public protecting me. Later he went and stabbed a boy about 12 years of age who had come from a neighbouring district to see me. I visited him several times in the hospital and he got well. The man, they were able to trace was a tailor from Malabar or some place in the south. He was prosecuted I think, but I don't remember what happened to him.

"The most serious attempt I think was the one made in Srinagar in 1946. I was going through a narrow street in an open car with Sheikh Abdullah, when someone threw something at us from an open window. It fell in the rear of the car and exploded. Sheikh Sahab was seriously injured and had to spend several days in hospital. He nearly lost his eyesight. They discovered afterwards that it was a home-made bomb or some such thing.

"Then the security officer asked me about the frontier incident. There was not just one incident. I can remember a series of them I went



Commandos on guard in front of South Block, which houses the PM's office

through when I was minister-in-charge of the north-west frontier before partition. Caroe was then the Governor—rather an unreliable type—and the political officer was a man who created a lot of trouble for us. The first incident occurred when we were below a sort of ledge in mountainous country. Suddenly a number of persons started throwing rocks at us from the top—large ones they were—and several hit the car. Eventually the police came up and fired at them, or rather in their direction, and they ran away. The next incident was a bit more serious. We had just driven out of the place where we had halted for the night which was the house of the political officer. His car was in front. Suddenly a truck came in, and our car was completely isolated from the security car. Then began a furious volley of stone-throwing. The triplex glass stood it well. Closer and closer came the mob and more and more stones fell on us. The driver, who is now with us, Desh Raj, was seriously injured. There was some sort of security officer with us but he did nothing, and even hid under the seat. Dr Khan Sahab took his revolver from him and waved it about and the mob dispersed. Dr Khan Sahab and I received a few injuries."

"Well," he continued, "there was quite a stir about the incident and an enquiry was held by a judge from Madras, who gave a most extraordin-

ary certificate of merit to the political officer. There was another incident. I woke up in pain one night with a queer taste in the mouth—somewhere in the south. I found I was lying on the ground in the dark. I struggled up and found I had a bad bruise on the temple from which I was bleeding. The blood had gone into my mouth. I woke up my wife. She looked at me and fainted. Once again in Dehradun jail I found myself on the ground, and it seemed I had walked some distance and fallen down. It must be something to do with nerves or sleep or something. Twice I caught myself doing it—sort of trying to struggle up and walk in my sleep. It hasn't happened to me since, but I don't know what is the explanation for it."

When Pandit Nehru was the Prime Minister, a demented person tried to attack him with a knife in Nagpur. He was overpowered by brave police officers—P.R. Rajgopal and Terence Quinn. Both were awarded medals for gallantry.

There is one unusual aspect of Indian security which is so unlike that in any other country in the world. Nowhere do we have such large public meetings and security does not only mean looking after the PM and other important dignitaries, it has to ensure the safety of all those attending the meeting. The largest public meeting ever held in India was the Bulganin and Krushchev

meeting in Calcutta. Two-and a half million people attended that meeting and it is to the credit of the Calcutta police that no serious incident occurred at the meeting.

But one meeting in Lucknow had all the ingredients of a tragedy. It was some sort of a show arranged in a stadium with only three or four small gates. Thousands of children were in the middle and all around them there were lakhs of people pushing, struggling and fighting to come closer to the dais. Before the end of the meeting it became clear that there might be a stampede so Pandit Nehru kept on talking for about an hour after he had finished, asking the teachers to take the children home in an orderly manner. Slowly the columns of children began to go out. Each time the PM stopped, there was a move to

wards the gates, so he started again, admonishing the crowd, appealing, threatening, inviting the police to cordon off the children and lead them out safely. Today those children must be in their forties, and it was only the patience of Pandit Nehru that saved them from disaster and the remarkable part is that even their parents did not come to know how close they were to tragedy.

There are a lot of people who like to attract the Prime Minister's attention for strange, and often trivial reasons. There are, for instance, some desperate *fakirs* who want to burn themselves before his car simply because they have been refused gun licences by the district collector or because they had been arrested by the superintendent of police on charges of being *goondas*. And there

is that odd *maulvi* who turns up to display the bloodstained clothes his great grandfather wore on the day he was hanged for taking part in the mutiny of 1857. Then there are women who want to have a close look at the Prime Minister and the venerable seer who insists that the Prime Minister have the glass of milk he has brought with him to guard against danger. Besides, for thousands of men and women the Prime Minister is the last court of appeal: a woman whose only son has been shot dead in police firing, the father whose son has been missing since a crackdown and a man whose protests about his telephone bills were not being heard by anyone, would all rush to him for redress.

We have a reasonably good security apparatus. True, there was recently a grave slip but correctives have been applied and we do not know the full story yet. God willing, we will ensure the Prime Minister's safety for the next five years or till the next elections. Things may or may not be easier thereafter because one type of extremism may die out and another appear as in other parts of the world. Let us hope that by then all of us, including the PM himself, will have the basic tenets of security.

A point which security officers have failed to appreciate is that it is the people who are the best protectors of the PM and they will do it if they are guided in the right way. If millions of people feel concerned about the PM's security and rush to inform the police about any bit of information that they have picked up and even act as his guards it will help protect the Prime Minister against those who have designs on his life.

Probably the best way of ensuring the PM's life is to do the unexpected. If the PM suddenly decides to go for a ride in a fast car with one security man with him, it may be safe. If he abruptly decides to go to a place where he is never expected to go, he may be safer. If the time is such that the PM ventures out at a time when no other person in his position would do so, he would probably be the safest. Surprise is the key word in security.

More than the public, for whom security is an irritant, the PM himself has to learn that security is not something that can be bought, copied, rented for the day and least of all neglected. We have to learn the hard way, and that way means introspection, inspection, and innovation, which must be done continuously. If security becomes a dull routine, there is something very wrong with the system.



A police dog sniffing around the PM's South Block office

Feeding on the Dead

Selling pilfered skeletons abroad is big business

Calcutta has the dubious distinction of being the largest exporter of skeletons. The repugnant trade has legal sanction and government approval and had its beginnings in the city more than five decades ago. Today, it is a multi-million dollar booming business. In spite of protests, the trade has flourished allowing a large network of bone traders and clandestine operators, who are behind the sordid business to make capital out of the dead.

In 1976, the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi used Emergency powers to ban the export of skeletons. She, in fact, responded to the exposure of the racket, associated with the trade in the columns of *SUNDAY* (31 August 1975). The then union commerce minister, D P Chatterjee, had said, "The prestige of the country is much more than that (the earning of Rs 13 crores every year through exports)." However, the ban was lifted by the Janata government in 1977 and the city has remained the nerve centre for the

export of skeletons since Independence. Calcutta at present, caters to the skeleton markets spanning over 50 countries. From Calcutta, the skeletons find their way to the USA, Japan, Germany and even countries like Israel and Hong Kong. Dead bodies are brought to the city from Bihar, Orissa and other parts of the country to cater to the growing demand.

In any given year, more than 10,000 skeletons and 50,000 human skulls are shipped or airfreighted abroad. While export earnings figures for 1984 are not available, the foreign exchange earned through such exports is believed to have crossed the Rs 15 crore mark. That there has been a steady increase in the export of skeletons from Calcutta is obvious from the fact that foreign exchange earned through skeleton exports in 1979-80 was only Rs 85 lakhs.

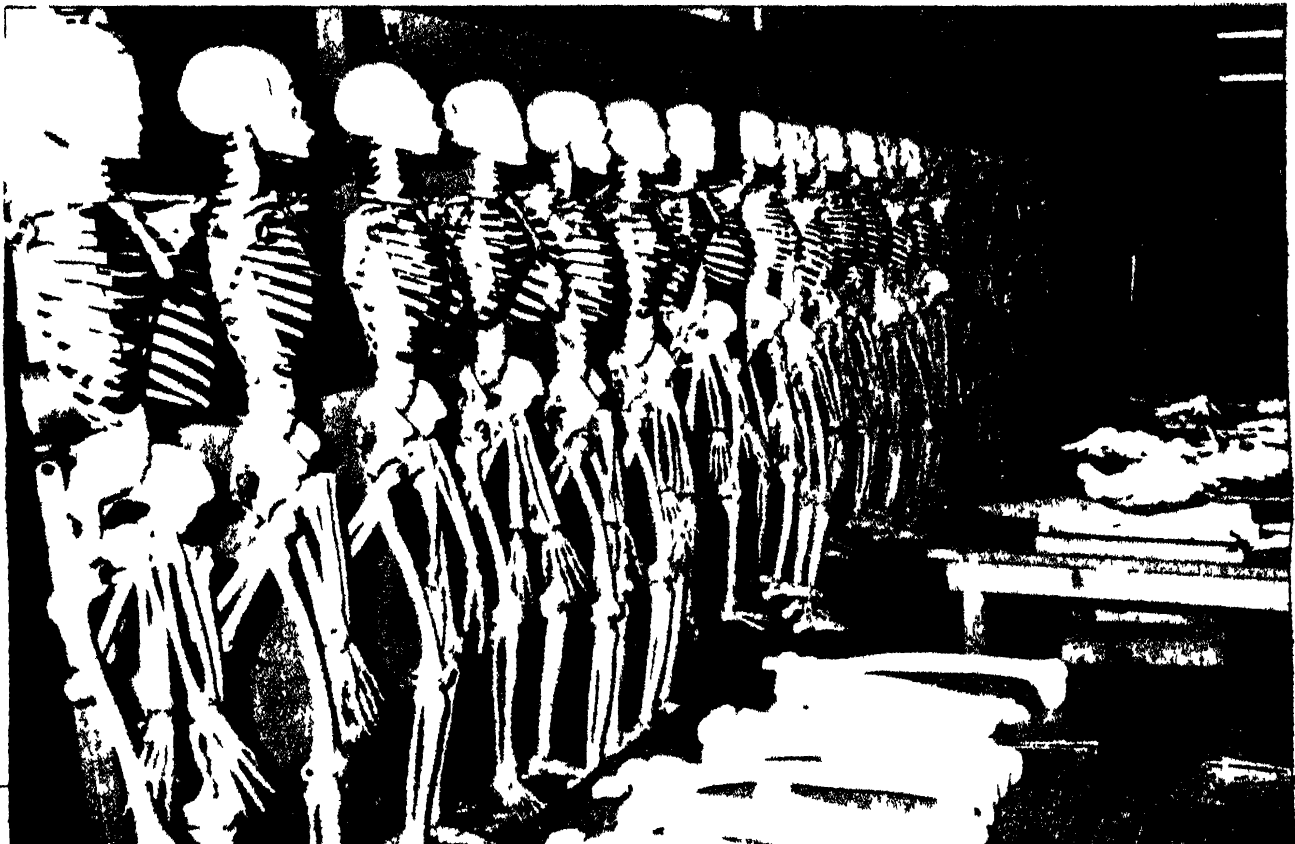
On the face of it, export of skeletons from Calcutta is allowed under the Export Control Order of 1977 and human skeletons are among

the commodities listed as "permissible." There is no ceiling for exports of human skeletons. Section 13(a) of the order states, "Export of human skeletons will be allowed by the port licensing authorities on production of certificates from (1) police authorities (not below the rank of an officer-in-charge of the concerned police station) regarding the source of procurement and (2) the foreign buyer stating that skeletons are required for biological and medical purposes only." Officials at the office of the Joint Customs Controller of Imports and Exports (JCCIE) emphasise that all shipments of bones or skeletons are allowed only after the certificates are produced by companies who are exporting them.

The system requiring documented proof for skeleton exporters was first introduced in 1979 when the government decided to "restrict" skeleton exports. The condition was initially a setback for the exporters who were allegedly obtaining their supply of bones through surreptitious means. However, they soon overcame the

Skeletons ready for export at a workshop in south Calcutta

T. A. Banerjee



initial setback as they realised that all they had to do was to produce a police certificate mentioning the place of procurement. Reportedly, most such certificates obtained from *thana* claim that the bodies have either been found by the riversides or are unclaimed *lawatis* bodies brought from one of the city's medical colleges or hospitals. A small bribe can fetch an exporter a certificate stating that as many as a hundred unclaimed bodies were found in a particular locality of Bihar or Orissa.

Besides the legal sanction, several other questions about this lucrative business in Calcutta remain unanswered. How does Calcutta receive its regular supply of thousands of dead bodies? How do exporters manage to convince the customs officials that procurement of such a large number of dead bodies is possible? And what is most important, who are the people behind this reprehensible trade?

The whole business is shrouded in secrecy, albeit the legality of the trade. Strangely, officials at the JCCF are unwilling to divulge the names of the exporters who have been issued licences on the plea that the subject is a 'very sensitive one'. They nevertheless disclosed that there are about 15 such firms in Calcutta; the prominent among them being Hilton and Company, Ramakrishna and Company, MB and Company and Vistas. Figures with the JCCF reveal that during 1984-85, the United States was the largest importer of human skeletons from India, accounting for Rs 95.5 lakhs of foreign exchange, followed by West Germany (Rs 15 lakhs), United Kingdom (Rs ten lakhs), Australia (Rs nine lakhs) and France (Rs five lakhs). Deputy customs controller S. Mukherjee said, 'Export of skeletons have been rising steadily because of the demand for the commodity from the west. Indian skeletons are in great demand and there is no move to ban such export.'

A ban on skeleton exports on humanitarian and social grounds has been proposed to the government several times but the matter has never been taken up seriously. On 29 March this year, the minister of state for commerce, P. A. Singma, informed the Lok Sabha that the state governments had been asked to take appropriate steps to curb alleged malpractices in the export of human skeletons. The government, he informed the House, was planning to 'restrict' export of skeletons and tighten the regulations for exports. Prior to this, there had been a spate



Doms dragging dead bodies at a Calcutta morgue

Alaka Mitra

of enquiries in Parliament as to why the government was permitting unscrupulous dealers to tarnish the image of the country in order to earn a meagre Rs 15 crores.

A senior official at the Hilton and Company on College Street said that while the price for a fully articulated

skeleton had gone up from \$100 in 1980 to \$230 at present, they were facing stiff competition from other companies who have jumped into the fray. He cited the example of Satvanarayan Sen, the former proprietor of Rekna Limited, considered the pioneer of the skeleton export

business in India, who had closed his shop situated at Tollygunge a few years ago. After running a successful business since 1937, Sen faced stiff competition and undercutting from new exporters some of whom were his own workers and was forced to revert back to his earlier book publishing business. Another exporter contacted explained that though their's was a profitable business it did not have the approval and sanction of the society. Besides they were facing a threat of reduced business in future since companies abroad are now producing plastic skeletons which can be used for the study of the human anatomy.

On account of the legality of their occupation the exporter of skeleton in Calcutta rarely faces the brunt of social abuse or police harassment. It is the persons who procure the skeletons for the exporter who are stigmatised and harrrowed. There exists in Calcutta a large and fairly

The Calcutta Medical College Hospital, is top on the *doms'* priority list for procuring dead bodies. At the hospital it is common knowledge that dead bodies are whisked away by the *doms* and sold to exporters. In view of such largescale pilferage of dead bodies from the hospital morgue the supply of dead bodies for dissection and anatomy study has been adversely affected. The college and the anatomy department of the hospital which is supposed to receive cadavers (dead bodies) from the morgue (from among the unclaimed bodies) have since the past few years been facing a paucity. This is the case in most medical colleges in Calcutta. It is believed that the *doms* sometimes pose as relatives of deceased persons to whisk away the bodies.

Outside the anatomy department of the Medical College, a large group of *doms* is always seen waiting so that they can procure a body. The

pay an exorbitant price for a skeleton, themselves belong to the vicious circle responsible for the acute shortage of bones and skeletons in the medical colleges in Calcutta.

These *doms* are believed to roam around several cremation grounds and graveyards in Calcutta, looking for half burnt bodies or buried corpses that can be exhumed. It is even possible that the *doms* procure dead bodies from poor families in exchange for a consideration saving them the expenses on last rites and cremation. To get hold of a dead body at the burial or cremation grounds is an easy job on account of the poor security arrangements at those places. Bodies floating near the banks of the Hooghly at the river sides of neighbouring cities are likewise picked up and degreased for extracting the bones. Dead bodies of infants are prized possessions for the *doms* as child skeletons have a high price tag and account for five per cent of the total skeleton export.

On receiving complaints about a largescale racket in bodies and bones the Calcutta police have intensified their vigilance on persons who are alleged to be involved in the bone business. Consequently there are *doms* who are facing serious criminal charges and imprisonment in the Dum Dum jail. The *doms* do face the danger of being nabbed by the police but more often than not the police choose to look the other way. On the other hand the untouchable *doms* are the only people in the country who are willing to sell the unclaimed and unknown bodies for a premium. The death rate among the *doms* and others who subsist on this practice of selling bones including the staff of the exporters who piece the skeletons together is high. Many suffer from gangrenous sepsis because of constant contact with infected corpses.

It is known to the police that there is a large mafia in Calcutta which feeds the skeleton export market. If this export has to be banned or at least severely restricted by the government as has already been suggested it would mean the rehabilitation of about 500 *doms* and their families who survive on the business of selling bones and eke out an existence out of carrying corpses. It would also mean the closing down of shutters of a handful of exporters who thrive on this trade. But at least it would put an end to a nefarious practice that has by now become common knowledge. In India human life is not expensive.

Ritu Sarin, Calcutta



Planks stolen from the Kashimtra burning ghat: poor security

well entrenched network of scavengers called *doms*. The *doms* usually dispose of unclaimed dead bodies from hospitals and medical colleges. These *doms* are the suppliers of bones and skeletons to the exporters.

The *doms* frequent the morgues and the cremation grounds of the city and gather dead bodies and sell them to the exporter or his agent. The body, when dug up is usually in a decomposed state and the bones have to be degreased, bleached and graded before they are packed and made ready for shipment abroad. The *doms* are sometimes apprehended and jailed for being in possession of a dead body or bones without the required documents. But usually the *doms* make their way through bribes and they even cross state borders with relative ease.

price for a skeleton for them could vary between Rs 70 and Rs 500. The *doms* are reluctant to talk about their mode of operation and they do not admit that they sell the bones to exporters. We only take unclaimed bodies from the morgue and sell the bones to the students who require them for their studies, said one *dom* who has been working at the morgue for over 30 years. This brings us to another curious aspect of the whole affair. The *doms* themselves admit that they take unclaimed bodies and strip them off their flesh for bones which they sell to medical students. Students in turn claim to be regularly purchasing skeletons or specimens of bones from the *doms* since the regular medical dealers do not have a ready stock of skeletons. The *doms* who force the medical students to

'I Want to Lead a Better Life'

Charles Gurmukh Sobhraj told Ritu Sarin

"Charlie has refused to come for the interview," announced the warden of Tihar Central Jail, where Charles Gurmukh Sobhraj returned after five years. (The staff of the jail was obviously familiar with Sobhraj who had the reputation of being one of the most popular convicts when he was lodged in Tihar after his sensational arrest in New Delhi on 5 July 1976.) "You will have to come back and try another time Sobhraj is a very moody person," said the jail superintendent, A.B. Shukla. However, ten minutes later Sobhraj walked briskly into the superintendent's office. He had, it seemed, changed his mind. However, more protests followed. "Meet my lawyers if you want an interview," he said in his accented tone. Only after further persuasion did he agree to have a short conversation, but without touching upon his past criminal record.

The 41-year-old pale, visibly thinned Charles Sobhraj looked very different from the handsome, suave gems dealer who had been caught by the Delhi police eight years ago, photographs of whom had been flashed around the world, showing him either as an immaculately dressed businessman or a playboy in swimming trunks. One author described Sobhraj as "the most perfect specimen of the human species." But the Sobhraj of today, who walked into the superintendent's office, was a bespectacled, innocuously dressed middle-aged man. Perhaps, he wore the white floppy hat to hide the receding hairline, which had been so conspicuous in recent photographs taken during his visits to the Tees Hazari court. Ritu Sarin spoke to Sobhraj in Tihar jail. However, the superintendent of the jail refused to give in writing that the interview had been conducted in his presence. Excerpts:

Q: Were you expecting your rearrest outside Karwar Jail in spite of being free of all criminal charges in India?

A: I had expected it. Still, for me, it was a great relief to be considered a free man in India. I was confident that I would be acquitted in both murder cases (A.A. Jacob case and Luke Solomon case). Even before my orders for release were shown to me, I was told I would have to face

extradition proceedings in Delhi on a request from the government of Thailand. I had prepared myself for being behind bars again and was not in an anxious (frame of) mind when I was shown the warrant of arrest by the police outside the prison gates.

The conclusion of criminal charges in Karwar is like the last chapter of the Indian episode of my life. This will leave an open door for me to lead a better life. That is, if I win the extradition case in Delhi.

Q: When you were caught by the Delhi police outside Vikram Hotel, you were facing criminal charges for murder, forgery and looting in Paris,



Charles Sobhraj

Beirut, Kathmandu, Hong Kong and Saigon besides India. Now that you are free in India, has any other government besides the government of Thailand demanded your extradition?

A: There were charges against me in other countries, but I am not aware of any further requests. This is a legal matter—it is possible that the Indian government does not have an extradition treaty with these countries.

Q: If you are sent to Thailand...

A: I do not want to talk about Thailand as yet. I will take up the matter with the Indian government and I am confident I will win the

extradition case. I have just received the details of the Thai case from court. As per the records, supplied to me by the chief metropolitan magistrate (Subhash Wason), I believe there is *no prima facie* evidence to connect me to the offences under which I have been charged. I will be giving all these details to lawyers I have appointed in New Delhi to fight my case.

Q: At the time of your release from Karwar, there was no member of your family or any friend to meet you outside prison. Did you not inform them about your release from Karwar?

A: I have been leading an isolated life for some time now. After I was convicted to life sentence in May 1982 in the Varanasi case, I decided to put an end to all help and assistance from relatives and friends. Several people approached me with help (both financial and otherwise) but I put down their appeals. I said no, I am going to face my life alone. I gave the burden of a life sentence to myself alone.

Q: While in prison, you have been the subject of two autobiographical sketches, *Serpentine and Life* and *Crimes of Charles Sobhraj*. Which manuscripts have you completed in Karwar Jail which you are now going to release for publishing?

A: I have been in touch with several authors during my term at Karwar. Richard Neville (the co-author of *Life and Crimes*) has been in contact with me and has been very helpful with advice on further writings as well as with supplying me with reading material. I am also in touch with Dennis Reinhardt of the *Sunday Times*, London, for a book on my life.

After I was acquitted in the Varanasi case, I wrote a fiction about the legal loopholes concerning Indian women. This manuscript is finished and the book will be published by Pan Publishers (who published the two other books). The story revolves around two sisters who are caught inescapably in the Indian system of dowry. I have tried to contrast the Indian women with women in the west and exposed the Indian dowry system.

Q: In your years of captivity, have you come close enough to Indian women to write about traditions and cultures affecting them?

A: I can say that I have picked up the Indian mind even while living in

prisons Each race has its own background, culture and philosophy I have picked up a lot of Indian life and culture during my years here Because my father was an Indian, I already had an Indian connection and in prison I read many books about this country authored by Indians, which gave me an insight into the Indian mind and the life of Indian women, which is so different from the life that women lead in the western countries where I have lived

Q Will you be exposing (in the book) only the pernicious down system or the Indian legal system as well?

A I do not want to expose the Indian law I have a lot of respect for Indian courts and Indian law I feel your democracy has succeeded only because of your legal system If the Indian courts and legal system had not been strong and honest then it would have meant the end of the democratic system in India

Since the past three months I have started another fiction It will be called the *Blackwolf* I have completed nine chapters of the book I have also signed an agreement with an Indian journalist for co-authoring a book on my life covering the years 1976-1985 While I will be writing the biographical part of the book she will conduct interviews with various persons connected with my life

Q Several film producers have approached you for filming your life as one of the most celebrated criminals of modern times Has any contract been finalised?

A One Hollywood producer David Bryce who had produced *Midnight Express*, signed a contract through my agents of *Life and Crimes* for making a biographical film about four years ago Since one year there has been no news from them Another producer had purchased the rights from the publishers of *Serpentine* for making a motion picture but there has been no recent development on this film also

Q Are you in touch with your family in Vietnam or Shireen Walker, the American writer who you married in Varanasi jail?

A I did not want any of these people to support me financially I had turned down all requests for help As far as my family is concerned, I met my mother last in 1976 before I was arrested in New Delhi My father died at the time of the Vietnam war in 1973 Shireen Walker was deported from India soon after our marriage in Varanasi jail on 15 November 1981

Q How were you informed about the death of Marie Andree Leclerc,

your first wife and accomplice in several crimes?

A Marie Andree died on 20 April 1983 and I was told about her death in prison Coincidentally, I was acquitted in the Karwar case on 20 April 1984 one year after the death of Marie Andree She had been released on bail by the Indian courts and had been hospitalised in Canada before her death I was deeply affected by her death After her death, I have come closer to God Though I have always believed in God (pointing to an image of Christ hanging from a pen clip in his pocket), it was after the news of Marie Andree's illness that I came closer to

No, it was not poverty (that motivated me to lead a life of crime and violence). It was because of the circumstances of my life, because of the psychological experiences of my life. For example, for about five years, after I was 16-17 years old, I did not have a national identity... But why talk about these things now? I do not want to give myself excuses for my past. Everyone is responsible for what he has done.

God I decided then that I am going to forget my past, go into writing in a big way and lead a straight life Maybe I can become a successful writer in India

Q If you win the extradition case will you continue to live in India?

A I will request the Indian government to allow me to stay in India I will fight under Article 5 and 8 of the Indian Constitution to be granted Indian citizenship and will make a new beginning

Q Will your past allow you to lead a different, straight life?

A I do not deny that I have had a bad past But I believe that what has happened was my *karma* All I can

say now is that my future is going to be very different from my past Since the past few months (which I have spent in Indian jails) a lot has changed in my mind Since the past few months I have an urge to do something positive and to create something maybe through writing I cannot wash away my past but this does not mean I cannot be a different man

Q Do you repent your past?

A I cannot reply to that All I can say is that I admit my past was not good I do not want to have a future like my past

Q What motivated you to lead a life of crime and violence? Was it poverty, a thrill for lawlessness or other influences?

A No, it was not poverty It was because of the circumstances of my life, because of the psychological experiences of my life For example, for about five years after I was 16-17 years old I did not have a national identity But why talk about these things now? I do not want to give myself excuses for my past Everyone is responsible for what he has done I can only say again that I attribute my past to the circumstances of my life and psychological experiences that I had in my childhood

Q But now you have to face charges for your past actions in a land where laws are far more tough than in India How will you defend yourself if extradited to Thailand?

A I cannot discuss that It will be sub judice since my extradition case is before the court

Q You had said to the authors of *Life and Crimes* that you will deny "everything if you are ever hauled up before the courts in Thailand"

A I do not want to comment about the possibility of my facing courts in Thailand I am confident I will win

Q You had also said during an interview to the same authors that you never kill "good people"

A I did not write the book myself I never said such things

Q Is it true that while being transported to the Tihar Central Jail in an armed convoy you treated the guards and jailers with disrespect and harassed them on the way? Even now at the jail there have been complaints about your arrogant behaviour

A We had no problem on the way In fact the journey to Delhi was quite nice As far as Tihar Jail is concerned, people think receiving books and having reading material in prison is being treated like a VIP Does it mean if you have many books you are a VIP? In prison, my best friends are my books and my typewriter

BORDER WAR

Setting the Glacier on Fire

Indian and Pakistani forces exchange fire

The uneasy truce along the line of actual control in Kashmir has given way to a mini-war in the Siachen glacier region. While, the Pakistani and Indian pickets on both sides of the 74 km long glacier have been exchanging fire regularly, the Indian army has begun preparing for the worst. A team of mountain warfare experts led by Lt General S.P. Hoon, who once commanded a corps in the Ladakh sector, has been flown in to organise the defence of the region in case of a joint thrust by Sino-Pakistani forces.

The first major 'incident' occurred on 23 June 1984 when three Indian jawans at a forward observation post spotted a number of "mountaineers" moving towards the Siachen glacier. The snow-suited men were armed and were Pakistani soldiers, probably belonging to the Northern Light Infantry or the Special Services Group. With their field telephone dead, the jawans decided to ski down and intercept the Pakistani soldiers. At that moment, the Pakistanis opened fire, killing one jawan and injuring another. The third soldier, however, managed to escape and reach the main outpost in the area. The Pakistani forces attacked, but were repulsed with heavy losses and scores of their dead and wounded were later flown out by helicopter to Bunji, the nearest Pakistani cantonment.

Such incidents have been continuing for the past one year. In the fighting so far, Pakistani forces have suffered at least 100 casualties. Exchanges of fire, in this yet-undeclared war, are common. In February this year, Indian and Pakistani forces fired at each other for a record 17 days at a stretch. The Pakistani Air Force has also been active and their fighter aircraft have continuously violated Indian airspace. According to Lt. General M.L. Chibber, GOC-in-C, northern command, Pakistani fighters violated Indian airspace mainly on photo reconnaissance missions. They have also tried to intercept IAF transport aircraft which were dropping supplies on the border outposts.

The main reason for the dispute goes back to the 1949 Karachi agreement and the summit at Shimla between Z.A. Bhutto and Indira Gandhi in 1972. At Karachi, the cease fire line was drawn upto Point NJ to the south of the glacier and no decision was taken regarding the glacier region. The Shimla agreement also disregarded the Siachen area with the line terminating at point NJ 9842, near Thang. Thus, the Siachen area was left unmarked on the map. Meanwhile maps, including those issued by the United States have shown the glacier area as a part of Pakistan.

With intelligence reports suggest-

ing that Pakistan was planning to occupy the area and was forming a special snow warfare force, it was decided to launch a number of expeditions to strengthen India's claims on the area. The first expedition was led by Col N. Kumar of the High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) at Sonmarg in October 1978. A nearby mountain, Apsaras I, was also scaled by a group of army mountaineers led by Brig. K.N. Thadani in 1980. The next year, another expedition was launched by the Indian army and two mountain peaks, Sia Kangri and Saltoro Kangri were scaled.

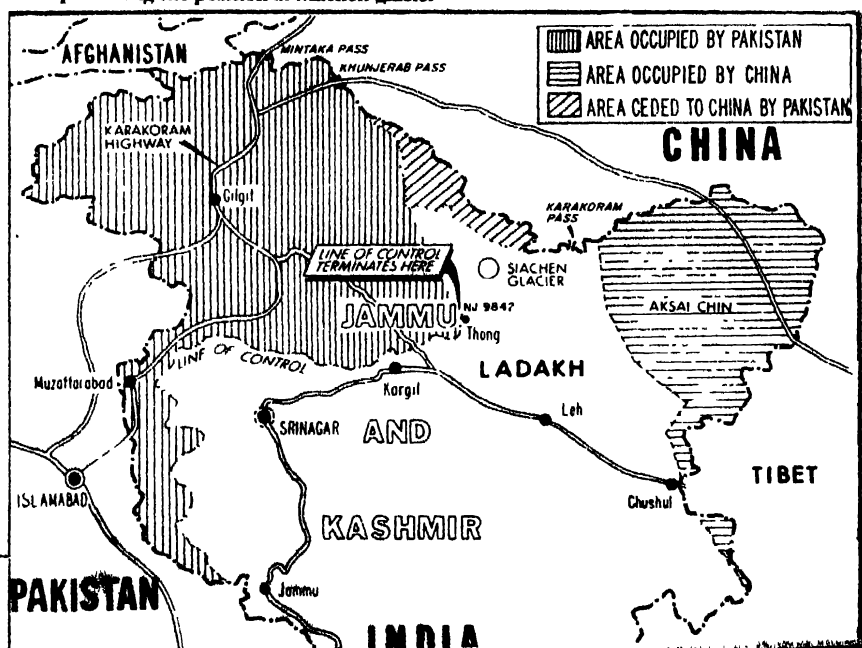
It was precisely such flag-waving exercises that the Pakistanis resented and in turn began to prepare for a big international expedition on Indian territory in 1984 and set up manned outposts through the winter of 1983-84. It was then that the Indian government decided to take action. A battalion of the Kumaon regiment was hastily airlifted to the Siachen glacier area in November 1983. In conditions which makes survival difficult (temperatures down to -50°C and blizzards), the Kumaonis began taking up their positions on the glacier and set up machine gun nests. The price they have had to pay was heavy. Altogether 27 officers and jawans were killed last year, not by Pakistani snipers but by an avalanche.

What is the reason for such a bitter war for the control of an area which is nothing more than an icy wasteland? According to a number of officers of the Indian army, the attacks could be probes by the Pakistani army to test the Indian positions before a major campaign to gain control over the strategically located Siachen glacier. This in turn would give the Pakistani armed forces a foothold in the Nubra valley adjoining the glacier and brighten its chances of cutting off Ladakh and the entire Karakoram region.

The Pakistan government has also launched a strong propaganda offensive. The Pakistan foreign minister Sahebzada Yakub Khan recently told the newly-elected Pakistan National Assembly that the glacier region "formed a part of the northern areas of Pakistan" and claimed that diplomats of both countries had already discussed the issue. According to him, three flag meetings between the Indian and Pakistani commanders have been held to settle the problems.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

A map showing the position of Siachen glacier



NARCOTICS

Crackdown on Drug-pushers*Delhi policemen recover 100 kg of heroin*

In June the Delhi police seized a huge amount of narcotics especially the expensively priced drug 'heroin', in four separate raids. The amount recovered exceeds the total haul made in 1980. Raids on smugglers and their hideouts have resulted in the recovery of more than 100 kgs of heroin worth at least Rs 50 crores in the West. When compared to the seizures of heroin in the capital during the past few years, it becomes clear that the drug business has been taken over by a well-organised network of smugglers. The first time heroin was seized was in 1980 when 500 gms was recovered from a small time carrier. Earlier raids had resulted in the seizures of hashish and opium which do not fetch such high prices in the international market. From 1980 there has been a steady increase in seizures. In 1983 27 kgs of heroin was seized and 45 kgs were recovered in 1984.

The seizure have affected the narcotics trade in the capital. The most notorious smugglers are in police custody and other small time operators who have been smuggling hashish and heroin have gone underground. Heroin hashish or adulterated heroin commonly known as 'smack' or 'brown sugar' are no longer easily available.

The drug syndicate, busted by the Delhi police appears to have had connections with a larger international gang in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They also controlled a large part of the narcotics trade in the capital. According to police sources the recent arrests are mainly due to the sustained interrogation of persons arrested earlier this year. The kingpins of Delhi's narcotics racket, Sarmukh Singh and Ishwar Kumar Chopra were arrested by the Delhi police this year. Sarmukh Singh has subsequently been released on bail.

Sarmukh Singh was nabbed with 156 kgs of 'smack' in his car in the Karol Bagh area. In fact, Singh has been listed by the police as a notorious smuggler. In 1961, he was arrested for smuggling gold. After lying low for several years, he took to peddling narcotics. He met Ishwar Chopra in the beginning of 1980 and the two decided to become 'partners'. In December they visited Pakistan.

Ishwar Kumar Chopra has been arrested for bootlegging and smuggling *charas*. He once ran an illicit liquor business with his elder brother Jagannath Chopra in the Darva Ganj area before switching to narcotics. He soon became a big name and he is said to have smuggled heroin and hashish worth crores of rupees. On 29 August 1984 he was one of the 11 persons arrested in connection with the seizure of 497 kgs of hashish valued at Rs 30 lakhs at Bidhiouri Jattan village in RS Pura tehsil bordering Pakistan. Ishwar Chopra was, however, released on bail by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court since there was no proof of his direct involvement. The Jammu police are however likely to revive the case because of the arrest of Chopra in Delhi.

The 50 year old smuggler was finally nabbed on 14 June near the Amba cinema in Delhi. At the time of arrest he was in possession of heroin worth Rs three crores. The heroin Chopra confessed had reached Delhi from Afghanistan via Pakistan across the Punjab border. Chopra's passport (No. 965019) showed that in the past three years he has visited Pakistan 24 times and also travelled to Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore and Tanzania. A personal diary seized from among his belongings contained the names of several "powerful and high ranking Indian officials." A visiting card of Sajid Hassar, first secretary (commercial) in the Pakistani embassy was also recovered. Chopra presently being interrogated by the police is a very vital link for the Delhi police to make further arrests. Already, Chopra has named the top drug pushers living across the border. They are Seth Abid, Chaudhury Akram, Chaudhury Yusuf, Chaudhury Mahboob, Iqbal and Major Javed. According to the

Ishwar Kumar Chopra top smuggler

police, it is Major Javed who is the biggest heroin smuggler in Pakistan. Both Sarmukh Singh and Ishwar Chopra smuggled into Delhi the contraband supplied by these Pakistani smugglers.

While Singh and Chopra operated mainly from Delhi and visited Pakistan regularly, the arrest of Abdul Latif, a Pakistani national disguised as a Sikh has given a new dimension to the case. Abdul Latif was caught on 5 June following a tip off while he was riding his scooter, (DIF 8294) in which 45 kgs of contraband had been concealed. The police also seized 450 kgs of hashish marked 'made in Afghanistan' from an isolated spot near the Gurudwara Gobind Sar on the GI Karnal Road. A total of 510 kgs of hashish valued at more than Rs five crores was recovered. Three Sri Lankan passports were also seized along with some photographs and letters written in Urdu.

Immediately after his arrest Abdul Latif claimed his name was Baldev Singh and he was a resident of a village near Lahore. It was only during interrogation that he confessed he was not a Sikh but a Pakistani national passing off as one. He admitted that he belonged to the Mura Ki Khuri area of Lahore and had slipped into Amritsar last year after murdering Munnawar Khan, the brother of a Colonel in the Pakistani army. On reaching Amritsar, he met Jagu Singh and became a drug pusher. He also confessed that the consignments of hashish which were recovered from him belonged to Chaudhury Yusuf of Lahore, the syndicate leader there. The link between Abdul Latif and Sarmukh Singh was established. Not only had both named Chaudhury Yusuf as their 'contact' in Lahore but because consignments recovered from both were identically packed in neat olive green canvas bags. Both persons also named Chopra as one of the top smugglers in Delhi.

Senior police officials including H C Jatav, additional commissioner of police, Delhi range and Chaudhury Raghubir Singh, assistant commissioner of police north district claim that one of the reasons why such arrests do not have an impact is because of extremely lenient laws against narcotics smugglers. The maximum imprisonment for a person convicted in a narcotics case is three years. Even in the most serious cases, arrested persons are released on bail after three to six months. Top smugglers like Ishwar Chopra, will probably bounce back in a few months.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

NORTH EAST

Chastened by the Centre

Union government to resolve border dispute

The dispute over the Assam Nagaland border which resulted in violence and death in the Merapam area is now to be taken up by a high level committee to be appointed by the government soon. The decision that the centre should intervene to resolve the border dispute between the Congress(I) ruled states, was taken when the home minister S B Chavan and the two state chief ministers Hiteshwar Saikia and S C Jamir, met on 18 June. The hour long meeting of the ministers was the first major step taken by the government to hammer out a solution to the

recent clash over the "constitutional boundary" of Assam and Nagaland.

Although only a few details were available of the outcome of the meeting after it was over both chief ministers affirmed their faith in the committee and its decisions on the dispute. They agreed that till the committee is set up to make recommendations on the sensitive situation, the police forces of both the Congress(I) states would be withdrawn to positions prior to 26 May. The entire area which has become an "area of confrontation" would be manned by personnel of the Assam

Ratles and the Border Security Force.

Although the meeting of the home minister with the chief ministers is said to have paved the way for a peaceful solution it is evident that the hostilities will not end soon. The home minister had requested the two chief ministers to refrain from making any public statements which could jeopardise the agreement reached on the setting up of the committee when he arrived at Kohima on 21 June. But chief minister S C Jamir charged the Assam government with indulging in a "flagrant violation" of the 1972 interim agreement between the two states. During question hour in the state Assembly the chief minister S C Jamir reiterated that they had set up only four police posts in the disputed area when the Assam government had established 3 posts.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

Sabotage in the Air

It was the ghastliest disaster to strike an Indian airline. On the morning of 23 June 1985, an Air India Jumbo (Boeing 747) with 329 people on board suddenly crashed into the Atlantic about 180 miles off Cork, on the south western coast of Ireland. There were no survivors. The extermination was complete. A couple of RAF planes, three helicopters and an Irish warship which set out on a rescue mission soon after automatic distress signals were received from the ill fated Jumbo found only debris and corpses on the water. Was the Jumbo then, blown up by terrorists in mid air?

The plane disappeared from the radar screen at 12.45 pm IST, barely ten minutes after it had reported to the control tower that everything was normal. According to union

minister of state for civil aviation Ashoke Gehlot. An explosion is considered a possible cause of the disaster in view of the fact that the wreckage is spread over eight kilometres. Although airlines sources in London could not ascertain the cause of the crash they too did not rule out an explosion or sabotage. Officials at Shannon airport said that the aircraft appeared to have "dropped like a stone" from a height of 31,000 feet.

David Learmount, who is the air transport editor of *Flight International* in an interview to the BBC cited circumstantial evidence pointing to a bomb explosion as the cause of the crash. A Boeing 747 can fly on only one engine and at that altitude it could glide for half an hour without engine power. But this would take the Air India plane

further on its course than where it disappeared. The three Learmount said is a serious omen.

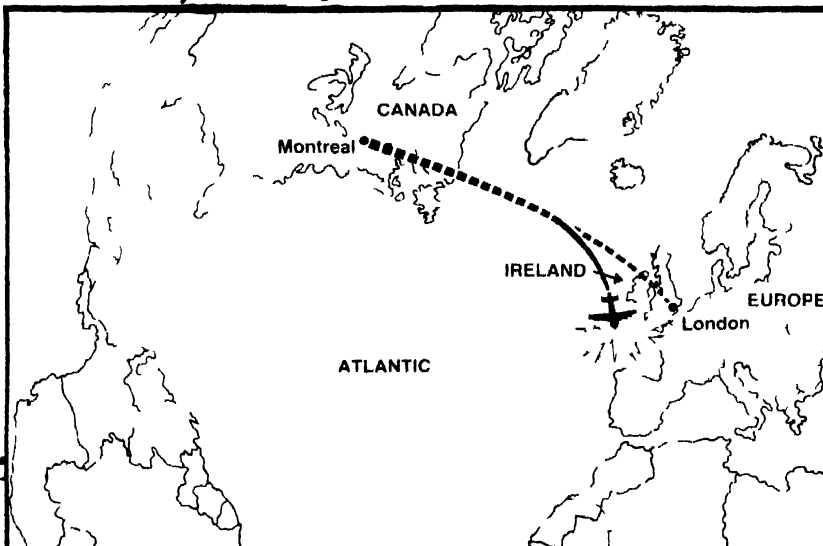
Pilot's co-pilot, Ramo Ramo, did not know and how do avoid them. No Mayday signal was received from the plane. And even if its electrical system had been knocked out of order which is very unlikely, the plane's radio would have kept running for about half an hour on batteries. Learmount also said that at the altitude the plane was cruising, at the pilot would have had a lot of time to regain control over turbulence. "But if the aircraft had been severely damaged then he might not have had any control to regain. The scenario of the crash, Learmount speculated, screams at you that it was a bomb.

When the 747 disappeared from radar screens, the Shannon control tower radioed the pilot of the TWA flight 770, another Jumbo which was cruising 12,000 metres above the Air India aircraft's last reported position. "He (the TWA pilot) was told to look out of the window," said Tim Keane, a spokesman at Shannon airport. "But he couldn't see anything. There was cloud cover at 4,570 metres."

Among the dead was Y. Nayudama, former director of India's Central Weather Research Institute, Inder Thakur, a model who was the flight purser on the plane and hundreds of other Indians. Incidentally, the only Sikhs on the flight were with their families.

A Special Correspondent

The course taken by the Air India Jumbo



ORISSA

Human Blood for the Goddess

Brutal child sacrifices shock the people of a small town

When Radhamohan Barik (14), Akhil Barik (14) and Jalandhar (Kalia) Barik (12) did not come back home from the village fair on 15 June, little did their parents realise that they had met a gory end: their heads had been smashed against the walls of a Durga temple on Maninag Hill and their blood smeared on the ground in sacrifice to the goddess of *shakti*. As news of the bloody ritual spread, people in nearby Ranpur were left in a state of shock. Few believed that the temple could be the scene of a gruesome triple murder.

The oldest residents of the area claim that in the distant past, the temple was known for human sacrifices in the month of *Magha* (Janu-

kilometre from the village, where the annual Raja Sankranti fair is held. The boys were at the fair till 5.30 pm when they were last seen.

The boys' parents and relatives started worrying about their long absence. When they failed to locate them at the fair, they had hoped the boys had gone to see the plays being staged in the neighbouring villages and would return the next morning. But when the boys did not turn up, the families began their search.

It was the youngest son of a carpenter, Guna Maharana, who first discovered their dead bodies in the woods next to the temple. The backs of their heads had been battered and their

culprits. A carpenter, Guna Maharana and his two sons, Kabi and Chhabhi, who belong to Ladukeswarahi, a neighbouring village, were interrogated for several days. Suspicion about the involvement of the Maharanas arose because Kabi had gone to the hilltop early that morning and Guna and his sons are gamblers who might have thought of appeasing the goddess with the children's blood to ensure their good future. The sub-inspector of Ranpur police station said some materials were seized from the house of the Maharanas which were used in gambling. The local villagers, however, were unhappy about the police investigation. They alleged that the police and the gamblers were working hand in hand.

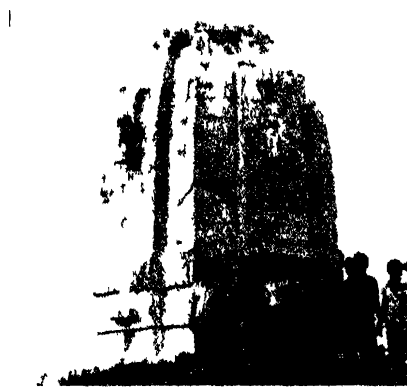
The sub-inspector of the local *thana* said the police were searching for Rabi, the eldest son of Guna Maharana, who was not available in Ranpur. A search has also started for



Akhil Barik

ary February). Drums would be sounded and royal messengers would make announcements, telling people not to look for missing members of their families, hinting that they had been sacrificed. But according to Bijoy Basant Sahu, the officer in charge of the Ranpur police station, there is no record of any human sacrifice in the area.

Radhamohan, the youngest of the three sons of Sanatan Barik, Akhil, one of the six children of Bhikari Barik and Jalandhar, one of the five sons of Bansidhar Barik, were close friends, studying in the village school, in classes six, five and four respectively. They belonged to poor barbers' families in Ranpurgarh, which lies 65 kms from Bhubaneswar. On 15 June, Raja Sankranti Day, a festival of the young celebrated in parts of Orissa, the three boys were seen in the village, swinging on ropes from a tree. They played among themselves till 3.30 pm that day, and were next seen in the temple at the foot of Maninag Hill, half a



The Durga temple

blood was smeared on the temple altar. The police quoted the doctor as saying that the sacrifice was performed between six and nine pm and that the boys had tried to resist.

The police are yet to trace the



Jalandhar Barik

some sorcerers in the area on whose advice the children may have been sacrificed on 15 June, which was an auspicious day, being a Saturday as well as a Sankranti day.

Sarada P. Nanda, Ranpur

BOMBAY

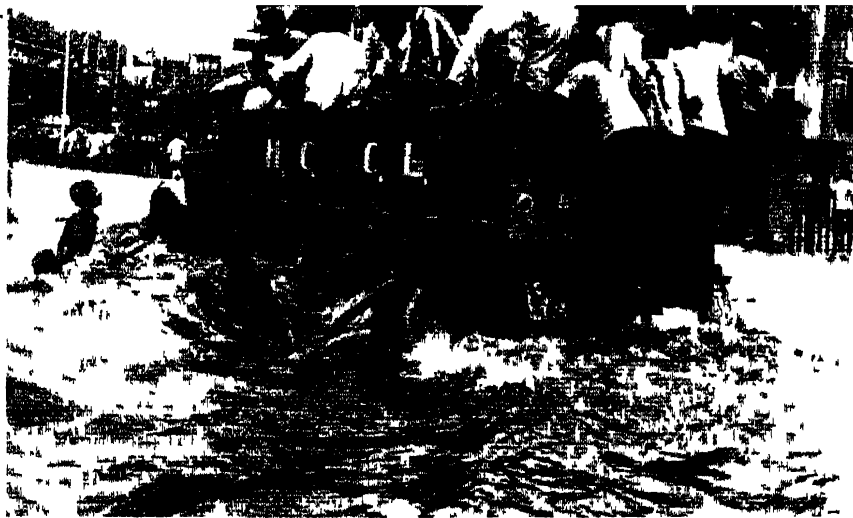
The Great Flood

Heavy showers bring the city to a standstill

Bombay's first spell of heavy rain all this season—about 340 mm in 24 hours—on 17 June brought the city to a standstill. It left 27 persons dead and telephone lines throughout the city were down for more than five days. The city's transport services were worst affected: the local trains, BEST buses as well as private vehicles did not venture out. And as the city limped back to normal, the marooned Bombayites faced the grim

prospect of getting used to floods during the rainy season. Kisan Mehta, one of the most active members of the Save Bombay Committee, has made it clear that floods are unavoidable because of the city's geographical location and its one-sided development.

Whenever the rainfall is more than 4 mm per hour, and it coincides with high tide, the drainage system in the city is likely to break down. This



A road in Bombay after the heavy rains

year, even though the city's municipal corporation cleared the drains at a cost of Rs 35 lakhs and removed the jalis over the manholes in order to improve the flow of water into the gutters, there were floods in most of the low lying areas of the city. In the areas like Colaba, Ghatkopar and Bombivli, water from the flooded streets even entered the ground floor of buildings.

Not even a BIST bandh can para-

lyse the city the way heavy rainfall does. The reason about 75 per cent of the city's work force have to commute from the northern to the southern part of the city every day. With the roads flooded and the railway tracks under three feet of water, the transport services remained paralysed and very few of the 20 lakh office goers and workers could reach the Colaba-Carmichael Bunder stretch, the busiest business district in the

city.

The reclamation of land at Nariman Point is believed to be another reason for the floodings in the area between Shivaji Park and Andheri. Earlier, all the water flowed into the sea but now, with land being reclaimed on the outer side of the original island, natural drainage is impeded. Drains in the island city are also choked.

Dr David Pinto, the high profile 'A' Ward municipal officer who spent most of his time going round the flooded areas on 17 June said, "When high tide and continuous heavy rain coincide, then even God cannot help the city. I went up to the sea front at Nariman Point and Cuffe Parade to see whether there was an outflow of water into the sea and saw that the level of the storm water and sea water were the same. Another problem, said Dr Pinto, is that builders do not provide drainage and sewerage facilities for the newly constructed skyscrapers in Bandra-Khar and in the eastern and western suburbs. Even the housing board does not provide these facilities," he added.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

WEST BENGAL

Communication Gap

The postal strike in the state ends

Even though the seven-day old postal strike was lifted on 12 June, the Post and Telegraph (P and T) department of the state still faces problems. While the president of the West Bengal Higher Secondary Council has appealed to the P and T department to expedite the delivery of answer scripts, the post master general (PMG) of West Bengal, C. Roy, admits that though sorting of letters have begun, some parcel bags are still held up in Orissa.

The strike was called on 6 June by the All India Mail Service Employees in protest against the government's decision to abolish the sorting of mail in trains, the introduction of computers and the government's policy to reorganise the Railway Mail Service and the Mail Motor Service. The day after the token strike, letters began piling up at the General Post Office (GPO) in Calcutta. The next day, the Reserve Trained Pool (RTP) workers who joined the strike were prevented from resuming duty. That day, at a meeting in front of the PMG's office in Calcutta, the strikers declared that unless the retrenchment orders on the RTP employees

were withdrawn, they would go on a total and indefinite strike. The PMG now wanted more time to decide as he was "dependent" on directives from Delhi. Meanwhile, the employees went to office, signed the attendant register but did little else.

The delay affected thousands of people, including pensioners and poor labourers. Besides railway receipts, parcels containing life saving medicines and other essentials also remained uncleared. On 8 June, a spokesman of the Post and Telegraph department in Delhi, called the strike "illegal" and said that the booking of insured letters and parcels would be suspended due to the non-cooperation of a section of the staff in the West Bengal postal circle. Mr Roy spoke about alternate measures including fresh recruitments and help from the army postal services to deal with the agitation. Such arrangements, however, could not be made.

On 11 June, with postal services in West Bengal still paralysed and the strike by agitating employees entering the fifth day, the PMG met Jyoti Basu. By now, the post offices were crammed with letters and many let-

ters were being destroyed by the rain. The strike was finally lifted the next day after the chief minister appealed to the strikers to lift the strike. The reason why the strike had continued was the department's decision to retrench the RTP workers. When the strike was withdrawn, it was said that their applications were being screened and most of them would be allowed to rejoin work.

Had the authorities in Delhi dealt with the problem seriously, the situation would not have worsened. It is believed that the union communications minister Ram Nivas Mirdha was not even aware of the situation when the chief minister spoke to him over the phone. Dipen Ghosh, MP and president of the coordination committee of the Central Government Employees Association, claimed that neither Mirdha nor the director general of Post and Telegraphs could be contacted during his visit to Delhi. Ghosh also pointed out that the reconciliation officer appointed to look into the demands of the striking RMS employees had not even served a notice to declare the strike illegal. The formation of the RTP, he claimed, was the brainchild of former communications minister C M Stephen in order to deal with striking workers, as the RTP men, not being protected by service rules, would not gain anything by joining a strike.

Rudranath Sanyal, Calcutta

DELHI

Structures of Uncertainty

But construction of houses at the Sainik Farms continues

Remember Sainik Farms? Those islands of opulence in posh south Delhi where the demolition squad of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) descended in May 1983 to cause havoc and destruction. The demolition of 13 unauthorised farmhouses had created ripples in the capital as the list of residents of the 600-acre area read like a who's who of Delhi. Among those who had suffered the wrath of the demolition squad were Rajan Nanda, managing director of Escorts, Narenderjeet Singh, owner of Yorks Hotel, Sanjay Dabur, Ashok Malhotra and Surinder Singh Pahwa, all prominent Delhi businessmen. Among those whose bungalows were not demolished were Mrs Amteshwar Anand, mother of Menaka Gandhi, Vikram Mahajan, chairman of Eicher Tractors and a number of others.

The Sainik Farms are once again in the news. After an ominous silence in the vicinity for fear of further demolitions, hectic activity is visible once again. While some farmhouses demolished beyond repair on 12 and 13 May 1984 are still in the same state, other farmhouses are being constructed in their neighbourhood. This, despite the fact that there has been no change in the status of the Sainik Farms area which comes under Section four of the Land Acquisition Act and prohibits any construction activity without the passing

of building bylaws. The new structures, like the earlier ones, have come up violating municipal regulations that apply to the area. Even after 1983, as many as 100 palatial farmhouses and villas, all of them unauthorised, have been built regardless of municipal rules.

Delhi Development Authority (DDA) officials have called the Sainik Farms complex the greatest land scandal in the country. Real estate agents point out that the land speculation in the area has perhaps been unprecedented. Farmland prices in the area have increased three-fold in the past five years. Today land in the Sainik Farms costs between Rs ten and Rs 15 lakhs per acre. The Sainik Farms, situated in a rural belt marked 'green,' are notified under Section four of the Land Acquisition Act, which prohibits construction if any farm is less than two-and-a-half acres and if the approach road leading to the farm is less than 30 sq ft wide. Not one of the 400-odd farmhouses that have been built has sanctioned building plan. Not one farmhouse has a 30-foot road leading up to it.

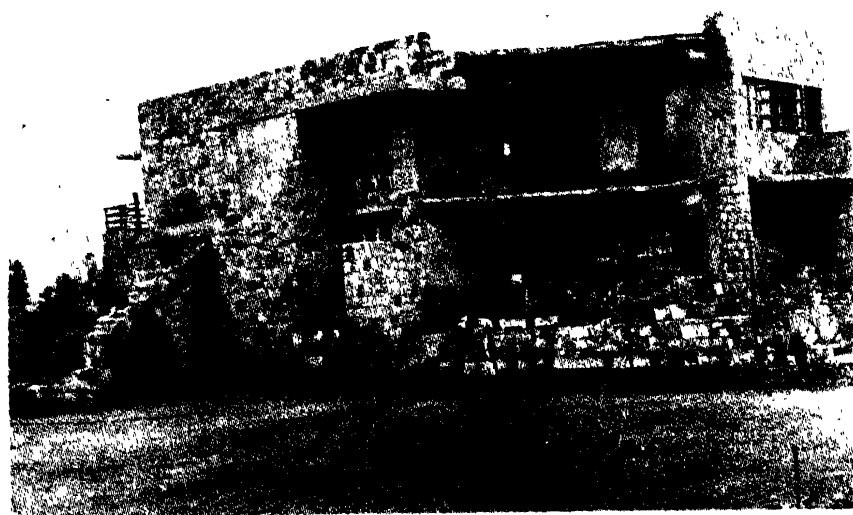
What is interesting is that there are at present two parallel movements operating in the area. While the MCD is planning to acquire sections of Sainik Farms as part of its proposal to take over 13,000 acres of village land in south Delhi, the resi-

dents of Sainik Farms are confident that a package deal they are negotiating with the authorities will soon materialise. Both views are gaining momentum and rumours are afloat—on the one hand that Sainik Farms will become an authorised residential colony, and on the other that the MCD may once again resort to sudden demolitions.

How can acquisition and regularisation go hand in hand? "Why not?" demanded Prem Kumar, vice-chairman of the DDA who has been involved in finding a solution to the problem and is now waiting for a final decision from the government. He explained: "An unauthorised, illegal residential colony has sprung up in the Sainik Farms in the guise of farmland area. In fact, there is little or no farming activity there. We are negotiating for a package deal with the *sainiks* whereby, they will retain only 25 per cent of the plots purchased by them. For this deal, we are doing away with the usual red tape and we hope the regularisation will be an example for further regularisations in Delhi." He added that if the MCD imposes Section six of the Land Acquisition Act before the orders of regularisation in the area, then too, they will go ahead with their plans.

However, according to R.S. Sethi, deputy commissioner of Delhi, there is little chance of the Sainik Farms being regularised, since orders have already been issued for the land to be taken over under Section six. "Some notices in adjoining villages have already been posted. There is no question of the residents being allowed to get away with such illegal constructions. Compensation will be paid to the original owners. We are going ahead with our plans of acquisition." Caught between these two views are the original Sainik Farm residents, transferred civilians and civilians, all of whom purport to be residents of the Sainik Farms. Said Major M.L. Malhotra, patron of the Sainik Farms Residents' Welfare Association: "There is a petition pending in the High Court because of which there can be orders for acquisition or demolition. We are hoping the government will agree to our package deal and exclude the built-up houses from their acquisition plans."

What exposes the callousness of the municipal authorities in the matter is that, in spite of the past demolitions and the widely publicised fact that all farmhouses are unauthorised structures, construction activity has progressed unchecked. Though MCD officials declare there has been very little construction after May 1983,



The half-demolished farmhouse of hotel owner Narenderjeet Singh

Praveen Jain

dozens of houses have been built there recently with many farmhouses still under construction. According to some owners, the MCD squads make regular surveys of new constructions and sometimes even demolish their small boundary walls. Their actions are not taken seriously as the walls are immediately raised again.

Who are the people who have purchased land in the Sainik Farms recently and even built upon it, knowing full well that the area was likely to be acquired by the DDA soon and that all construction there was illegal? This is a question that the residents and the municipal authorities are hesitant to answer. There are no complete records of ownership in the area since large plots have changed hands, mostly through power of attorney deals. Since the cost of land has shot up over the years and land prices have gone up to Rs 10 to 15 lakhs per acre, the new purchasers are some of the wealthiest citizens of Delhi.

Whatever be the nature of the construction, there is no doubt that the 600 acre tract of land has changed beyond recognition because of illegal construction. Before 1960, this was an undeveloped brick kiln area, part of which was allotted for housing retired armed forces personnel. The land marked as "rural green belt" in the first master plan of the DDA (formulated in 1961) was given to armed forces personnel. The



Rajan Nanda's farmhouse

Preveen Jain

Sainik Society was registered as a body in 1963 and though there were no takers for the land at that time, the demand went up soon. Unauthorised houses came up, some ordinary cottages, others marble and stone mansions. Land changed hands and many civilians purchased farms. Brig. B.S. Perhar, chairman of the Sainik Farms Association pointed out: "We came here more than 20 years ago, not knowing that our houses would not be regularised. Ever since we have resided here, there has been a sword hanging over our heads. It was the ministry of defence which asked us to occupy this land. Now the works and housing ministry wants to acquire it.

There have recently been a series

of meetings to sort out this problem. It is believed that senior officials of the DDA together with the Lt Governor, M.M.K. Wali are in favour of finalising the package deal with the residents. MCD officials, however, are against the regularisation of unauthorised constructions. They insist that not a single of the 400-odd houses, farmhouses, and hutments have got their building plans sanctioned. Others, who are against regularisation of farmhouses point out that the fears expressed by former Lt Governor of Delhi, Jagmohan who had been the architect of the demolition drama of 1983, have only come true.

Even before the demolitions, Jagmohan had discussed the dire consequences of illegal construction in the Sainik Farm area. "If the lands are not acquired they would be subject to speculation and would be colonised under the cover of setting up farmhouses." This is what has happened in the Sainik Farms today. The farmhouses are nothing more than extended kitchen gardens, and what exists today is a hotchpotch of unauthorised residential settlements built under the name of farmland. It is now to be seen whether the DDA and the MCD will succumb to the pressure of the residents, because of the political patronage enjoyed by some residents and refrain from acquisition or demolition.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

ARCHITECTURE

Living Among the Dead

Squatters encroach upon historical monuments

Encroachers and squatters aided by toughs are no respecters of the dead. Even as the state archaeology department is struggling to acquire the Paigah tombs by fighting a court case instituted by a distant relative of the Paigah family, the courtyard and pavilions of the mausoleums are being overrun by the illegal occupants who have paid a customary amount to reside among the graves. With the police not interested in clearing the area, the sprawling tombs are likely to be divided into plots for sale if the present situation continues.

The tombs of the once-famous Paigah family on the outskirts of Hyderabad are well-known for the delicate intricacy of stucco ornamentation, a speciality of the Deccan region. But only a few manage to get a glimpse of the tombs nowadays.

Strangers are discouraged from entering the tombs and a number of burly lungi-clad men lounging near the gateway bar the way. Inside the high walls of the courtyard is a flourishing slum.

The tombs have been identified as monuments which require protection for they "stand out as the most remarkable example of the regional Mughal variation style" of architecture, according to a recent study of historical monuments of Hyderabad sponsored by the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (HUDA). The state department of archaeology initiated proceedings to notify the tombs and their environs as protected monuments and the state government issued the 4(1) preliminary notification in 1983 with a two months' notice period for any interested member of the public to

raise objections to the acquiring of the monument by the archaeological department. Mohd. Dilawaruddin Khan, a descendant of the Paigahs obtained an injunction from the High Court against the archaeology department's notification in October 1983. Since then, the once-deserted courtyard of the tombs has become full of shacks. The hut-dwellers say that they have paid up to Rs 500 to Dilawaruddin Khan to be allowed to put up their huts within the three-and-a-half acre tomb complex of courtyards and gardens. The main gateway to the tombs—a double-storeyed structure housing a *naubat khana* (a place for the beating of drums at regular intervals) with rooms for attendants—is now a den for anti-social elements.

According to Dilawaruddin Khan, most of his family members are almost paupers: which is why he has returned to the tombs: "*Jab aadmi ke pas kuch nahi rahta, koi ghar nahi, to woh apne baap ki kabir par hi aata hai* (when one has nowhere to live, one returns to his ancestors' tombs.)" Dilawaruddin Khan, who also lives among the tombs, filed his

petition on the grounds that religious ceremonies will not be allowed after the tombs are declared protected monuments. The city police however, have not removed the encroachers despite the archaeological department having requested them over six months ago to evict the illegal occupants. Meanwhile the monuments are being defaced and material from the walls being removed by the encroachers to build up their shacks. Children romp around merrily breaking up pieces of the delicate ornamentation on the walls.

There are many graves, some even 25 years old Dilawaruddin's ancestors are also buried in the complex but the main branch of the Paigah family which has been in effect the custodian of the tombs and has even kept a watchman to tend the graves has given its permission for the archaeological department to take over the tombs. Before the state government issued the preliminary

notification, Begum Zaheer Yar Jung gave permission in writing to the archaeological department to take over the protection and conservation of the tombs.

An illustrious family of Hyderabad state the Paigahs were master builders having built the Faluknumaa palace which was later taken over by the Nizam. Their architecture was an elegant combination of European influences on the Mughal Deccan style. The tombs are an exquisite example of the stucco ornamentation which is a special feature of Hyderabad's buildings.

Land values in the area have recently shot up to Rs 150 to Rs 200 a sq yard. It is believed that the three and a half acre complex will be subdivided and sold as plots. A member of the family said bitterly "That fellow will sell the bones of his forefathers. He is only laying a false claim on the tombs for his own devious ends."

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

lately simple—a flesh wound and a fracture in the thigh. But the wound was stitched up without being cleaned and within three days, complications set in, with Sudha running a high fever. Her parents tried their best to get her discharged from the Tiruchi General Hospital but police formalities had to be completed. Precious time was lost and by the time she was taken to the Vijaya Hospital in Madras, gangrene had set in. According to Dr P V Mohandas, a doctor at the Vijaya hospital, amputation was the only answer, even though it would destroy Sudha's career.

Even as a child Sudha was interested in dancing. Her mother enrolled her in a dancing school before she was four years old. At the age of eight, Sudha had her *arangetram* and by the time she was 17 she had staged 80 public performances. On 5 June, however, a month after her accident, Sudha was told that her right leg would have to be amputated, three inches below the knee. The operation was scheduled for the next day. Talking to SUNDAY, Sudha says "I was shattered. I felt so bitter—I kept asking God: Why did it have to be me? I didn't want to live. Death seemed less painful. But I was a minor and my parents had already given permission for the amputation. The reality of amputation was so devastating that my brain couldn't take it any more. I became numb. I just withdrew from everything and everyone."

It was Dr Derrick D'Souza, Dr Mohandas' assistant, who mentally prepared her for her amputation and gave her hope and confidence. During the six months she was convalescing in Vijaya Hospital, Dr D'Souza painstakingly prepared her to face the future. Then after reading about Dr P K Sethi's Jaipur foot, Sudha met him in September 1981. When Sudha asked him whether she could resume her dancing with an artificial limb, Dr Sethi, a Magsaysay award winner, replied "Why not?" That inspired her and strengthened her resolve. She returned to Bombay.

At first she began to hobble around the house to get used to the artificial leg. As her gait improved she tried dancing. It was not only slow, it was terribly painful. There were times when the stump bled and she would collapse in pain and frustration. But she would resume, more determined than ever. Her dancing instructor, Guru Ramaswami Bhagavathar was also a great help.

Dr Sethi's Jaipur foot, unlike the other artificial limbs available in the country is pliant, and enables the

ENDEAVOUR

Triumph Over Tragedy

Handicapped dancer returns to the stage



Sudha (left) in the film *Mayuri*

At 10.30 pm on 2 May 1981 Sudha Chandran's nightmare began. Sudha, a Bharat Natyam dancer and her parents had just completed their annual pilgrimage to the Lord Murugan temple at Vayalur and were returning from Tiruchi to Madras. The bus she was travelling in collided with another bus killing one

person and seriously injuring Sudha and her parents.

The hospital authorities refused to attend to them immediately—completion of forms in triplicate takes priority over saving lives. Sudha not only received medical attention late, but when it was given, it proved to be disastrous. Sudha's injury was re-

patient to move with ease. Had it not been for Dr Sethi, Sudha would never have been able to resume her dancing. She was finally able to give her first public performance after the injury on 21 January 1984 in Bombay. It was a triumphant comeback. At that time, Ramoji Rao, editor of the Telugu daily *Tenadu*, decided to make a film based on Sudha's experiences. He got in touch with Sudha so that she could narrate some of her experiences. The director of the film Sreenivasa Rao was also impressed by Sudha's expressive and sensitive features and gave her the role. He was confident that he would be able to mould Sudha for the role. The film *Mayuri* is a box office hit. At the time of writing, it has already completed 100 days. The film has been dubbed in Malayalam and Tamil and will be remade in Hindi again with Sudha in the lead role. At



Sudha Chandran

a function organised by the Madras Telugu Academy in honour of Sudha Chandran on 16 June, Ramoji Rao told SUNDAY that he had invested Rs 26 lakhs in the film and expects to make Rs 70 to Rs 80 lakhs. He pointed out that the film is not entirely autobiographical. To enhance the saleability of the film, *masala* has been introduced in the garb of a wicked stepmother and a heartless boyfriend.

In an interview with SUNDAY, director Sreenivasa Rao said, "Sudha has a very expressive face. As far as I was concerned, the fact that she had no acting experience was her biggest asset. She was unspoiled by the experience. Her face is so sensitive that it can project the character and not Sudha alone. Rao believes that Sudha is a natural actress and disagrees that her fine performance was purely because of her experiences. He says that she acted equally well in the love scenes and those where she is abused by her nagging stepmother. Said Sudha's father, "Sudha was shy and docile before her accident but now she is confident and strong. I am no longer worried about her. I know that whatever be the situation, she can take care of herself fully. But Sudha has not been overwhelmed by the sudden flush of fame and fortune. She is happy but in a relaxed way. Her tragedy has given her a quiet strength. She is matter of fact and down to earth."

Though her limp is very noticeable when she walks, it is impossible to believe that she has an artificial leg when she is dancing. Her *mudras* are perfect, her *abhinaya* remarkable. In fact, Sudha's biggest asset is her expressive face. She has a stage presence and with the help of her dance master, Sudha has mastered almost all the difficult steps. She has made no compromises about her footwork. Sudha, who is doing her post graduation, told SUNDAY in an interview the day after her performance in Madras, "The accident made me more aggressive. Oddly enough, it made me more sure of myself. Dr Sethi, Dr D'Souza, my instructor and my parents helped me immensely. It was their support that strengthened my resolve and determination to continue with my dancing." Sudha recently signed on another Tamil film *Sarvam Shaktimayam* by Ben Surinder. Asked how she reacted to the film offer, Sudha replied, "I saw it as yet another challenge." She says she will accept only those roles which she considers "good and challenging." However, dancing will always get top priority.

Anita Pratap, Madras

LAW

Can Indians Abroad Vote?

Anomalies in the Representation of People's Act 1951 are preventing a number of Indians working abroad from exercising their franchise, a right guaranteed to them by Article 326 of the Constitution. The Election Commission has recently issued a notification saying that overseas Indians will not be given voting rights without giving any legal or constitutional justification. The Kuwait Malayalee Samajam, a cultural organisation representing Malayalees working there, has moved the Kerala High Court saying that denial of voting rights to overseas Indians is a violation of a constitutional right. A division bench of the Kerala High Court has issued notices to respondents including the Election Commission of India.

All democratic countries have given postal voting rights to their citizens working abroad. For French citizens in Pondicherry, postal ballots are provided by the French government. Constitutionally, an adult Indian citizen can only be denied voting rights if he is of unsound mind or if he has been disqualified by a court of law for corrupt practices. The Representation of People's Act gives voting rights to Indians working for the government of India. This means that those not working for the Indian government, but for a foreign

government, are not guaranteed to them by the Constitution. Another clause gives voting rights to women in government service abroad but not their husbands staying with them. Legal experts claim that this is a violation of constitutional rights.

Thus, any citizen who gets a job abroad automatically becomes a stateless person. The denial of voting privileges implies that citizens should prefer to stay in India with out employment rather than look for a job outside, if he wants voting rights in India. So, by denying voting rights to over 12 million citizens of India, a large number of the literate and earning members of the electorate are not allowed to have their say in the democratic process of the government.

If the court decides that this is indeed a violation of constitutional rights, a new literate and well-to-do voting bloc will make a big impact on the electoral system. The impact will be felt mostly in states like Kerala and Punjab as many Keralites and Punjabis are living abroad. According to estimates, there are more than one million Keralites working in the Gulf states. In Kerala, where election results are decided only by a few

TECHNOLOGY

Tussle Over Typewriters

Government departments hold conflicting views

The government's attempt to introduce new technology as a part of its electronics policy has not always been successful mainly because of bureaucratic wranglings. Two years ago, the Planning Commission and the ministry of finance had proposed to phase out the obsolete manual typewriters with electronic machines, but the suggestions were disregarded. At present a major controversy is raging over the classification of typewriters. While the finance ministry and the office of the Director General of Technology Development (DGTd) are insisting on indigenisation of electronic typewriters in the country which can only be a part of the existing licensing programme under their control, the Department of Electronics (DoE) feels that production of electronic typewriters should commence on a large scale with licences issued by them.

The ministry has issued licences to 12 companies for the indigenous manufacture of electronic typewriters, with a permission to import the necessary foreign components. The

total production capacity is about 80,000 typewriters (the present capacity for manual machines is 1,20,000) per year. These licences are in addition to two licences issued to the Network and the Logic companies by the DoE. According to DoE officials, further licences should also be granted by them as typewriters have become electronic items. "The government should not consider this a mechanical item any more and give all incentives to manufacturers who are a part of the electronics policy," said one official of the department. However, DGTd officials explain that under the Industrial Development Regulation Act of 1951, licences are issued for manufacture of "typewriters" alone. There has been no change in the policy of granting industrial permits for the manufacture of either electric or electronic typewriters. "For us the typewriter is still a mechanical item. Persons already producing the item have to request for a fresh endorsement of their licence," explained one official.

Surprisingly, the only company to

have successfully manufactured electronic typewriters indigenously is the one which has been denied a licence by the DGTd. The Godrej and Boyce manufacturing company which has an industrial licence to manufacture 50,000 manual typewriters annually and is among the largest typewriter-producing companies in the country, designed an electronic model with 100 per cent indigenous components, two years ago. Today, while others have got licences, it is only Godrej which has been denied permission to produce electronic typewriters. The company, in 1984, obtained a stay order from the Bombay High Court against the order of the finance ministry. The stay order was challenged by the ministry and the case is pending at the Supreme Court.

According to N. P. Paul of Godrej, "The present controversy over the classification of typewriters only proves that the government has not decided on its new policy. It is unfortunate that the government, while trying to encourage a new industry, is only giving a fillip to foreign collaborations and large scale imports. If the government was encouraging indigenisation then why have we not been given a licence," he demanded.

Electronic typewriters may be available at prices between Rs 7,000 and Rs 10,000 (the present price of typewriters) very soon. Already, portable electronic typewriters are sold at ITDC duty free shops for Rs 4,000 and more electronic typewriters are likely to be imported or smuggled in. Foreseeing such developments, the DoE had initially proposed that the electronic typewriter should be classified as a computer under the new electronics policy to encourage the industry and give incentives to entrepreneurs. The DGTd did not agree saying that the typewriter was a mechanical item and could not be called a "computer" since it did not have a display terminal. The technical data provided by the DoE did not convince the DGTd or the ministry to alter its stand.

The government's electronics policy is geared towards technological advancement. Officials of the Planning Commission admit that their aim was to rejuvenate the typewriter industry. In its list of proposals on consumer durables (including typewriters) which will form a part of the Seventh Five Year Plan proposals, the Planning Commission has reiterated that manual typewriters are considered obsolete in most developing countries.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi.

COMPUTERS

The Chip Invades India

With the announcement of the government's new computer policy, computer prices have come down quickly. Sales have picked up and the entire market is poised for a big leap—the biggest beneficiaries being the agents of foreign manufacturers. Fast moving giants like IBM, Hewlett Packard, Apple, Commodore and Sinclair are looking towards the subcontinent with renewed interest. Hewlett Packard has already signed an Elite Star as a partner and Sinclair has chosen Macmillan India. Rajesh Enterprises, Modi, Maruti and LSI and Matsushita are also all

wide range of computers available, but at a price. However, maintenance costs are likely to go up in the future.

The import of computers will infuse more competition in the industry. The cost is coming down and is now at par with internal prices. The 15 per cent excise levied on imported systems has been lifted and customs duty on four electronic components has been brought down from 75 per cent. The end-users can also escape 200 per cent duty under open general licence if the system costs less than Rs 10 lakh.

The policy is a boon for smaller

SRI LANKA

Peace at Last

But will it last?

The 'ceasefire in Sri Lanka' is one of the best developments in the island in the wake of the July 1983 racial holocaust. On 18 June, the minister for national security, Lalith Athulathmudali announced in Colombo that the five major Tamil militant groups and the Sri Lankan authorities had agreed to a ceasefire. The Sri Lankan government had previously refused to admit that a full-fledged war was being fought between the Tamil militants and the security forces, a war that was about to involve the civilians before it was arrested by the truce. "The cessation of hostilities from both sides," as the Sri Lankan government prefers to put it, will bring about the right climate for the resumption of negotiations for the formulation of a permanent political settlement within the unitary structure of Sri Lanka.

The day the ceasefire was announced, A.S. Balasingham, a spokesman of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) told SUNDAY that the decision about the ceasefire was a unilateral one taken by the Sri Lankan government without consulting the militant groups. The Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF) which comprises the LTTE, EROS, EPRLF and TELO all militant groups, will agree only to a "conditional" ceasefire. Their first condition is the return of the armed forces to the barracks which by itself indicates the conciliatory stand of the militants who had earlier demanded the withdrawal of troops from the Tamil homelands. The militants demand that the surveillance zones and the prohibited zones (fishermen along a stretch of the coast have had to abandon their homes and retreat to the interiors) be suspended. Another demand is that all restrictions on vehicular traffic in the north be suspended and that all political prisoners be released. Finally, the militants want the emergency laws including the Prevention of Terrorism Act to be withdrawn. Balasingham stated that the decision to observe a ceasefire would depend upon the implementation of these sets of conditions. He points out that a ceasefire can be effective only if the Tamil civilians can live normal lives. It now appears that the Sri Lankan government is willing to grant these "relaxations" as a gesture of goodwill.

The militants are convinced that

the Anuradhapura incident in which about 150 Sinhala civilians were killed led to a drastic change in the attitude of the Sri Lankan government which till then had become progressively anti-Indian. The ceasefire is also a tribute to India's good offices. Soon after the summit talks between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene, emissaries of the Indian government got in touch with the militants and conveyed to them the Sri Lankan government's demand for a 'cessation of violence'. The ENLF agreed but only if its six conditions were met. The conditions were conveyed to the Sri Lankan authorities who promptly announced the ceasefire without informing the LTTE that

operations, the last one being the blowing up of a rail track in Vavuniya on 18 June. Asked whether the ENLF would try to police them, B. R. Balasingham said they did not exercise any control over these groups. But he felt that such fears were unfounded as these small groups do not have the resources or personnel to attack the security forces in the barracks.

The attacks by the Sinhala security forces are often in retaliation to guerilla operations. So, if the militants give up violent activities, peace should prevail. The LTTE has made it very clear that should the security forces break the truce, they would retaliate. They have also stated that cessation of hostilities does not en-



Rajiv Gandhi (left) with Lalith Athulathmudali

most of the conditions would be met.

The ceasefire, nevertheless appears to be a reality. However, there are two factors that threaten to violate the ceasefire. Only the five major militant groups including the PLOT headed by Uma Maheshwaran have agreed in principle to the ceasefire. There are about 35 small splinter groups that are continuing guerilla operations and there is always the possibility that these groups may again take to violence. Groups that have representatives in India have been asked by the Indian government to maintain a low profile. However, there are a host of these small guerilla outfits in Sri Lanka. It would be impossible for the Indian government to contact and persuade them to adhere to the ceasefire. Groups like the Tamil Eelam Army headed by Panarguda Maheshwaran (which was responsible for the Madras airport blast) are continuing their

tail "laying down arms" or giving up the armed revolutionary struggle. They have only agreed to "hold fire."

The ceasefire is the first step towards a permanent political settlement that would fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Balasingham said that the ceasefire will last 12 weeks. Before the deadline expires, the militants expect the Sri Lankan authorities to come up with new proposals. If they don't, guerilla warfare will be resumed. These proposals would be adjudged by the Indian government, the militants and the TULF and if they were found to be acceptable, negotiations would be resumed. TULF secretary A. Amirthalingam told SUNDAY that any future negotiations with the Sri Lankan government must include the militants. It is clear that if the talks fail again, the onus of failure would not have to be shouldered by the TULF alone. Balasingham said

that the fresh proposals should not only satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils but also reflect the consensus of the Sinhala population. Though the government of India advocates a federal set up, the Sri Lankan authorities are not keen to go in for more than district councils or provincial councils. The nature of the distribution of power and funds, the system of security, police administration, the development projects that would be taken up would have to be clearly defined in the proposals so that there are no grey areas, said Balasingham. By sending constitutional experts for talks with their Indian counterparts, Jayewardene has proved that he is seriously think-

ing in terms of constitutional amendments to provide basic parameters of self governance to the Tamils.

The militants, particularly the LTTE, have never been in favour of negotiations. Asked whether they had diluted their stand due to pressure by India, Balasingham said that they were responding to the Sri Lankan government only because of India's "advice." "We know we have an honest broker in the Prime Minister. It may be pointed out that this is identical to the TULF's stand in 1983 when they, on India's advice had entered into negotiations with the Sri Lankan government. They had hoped that India's mediatory role would compel the Jayewardene gov-

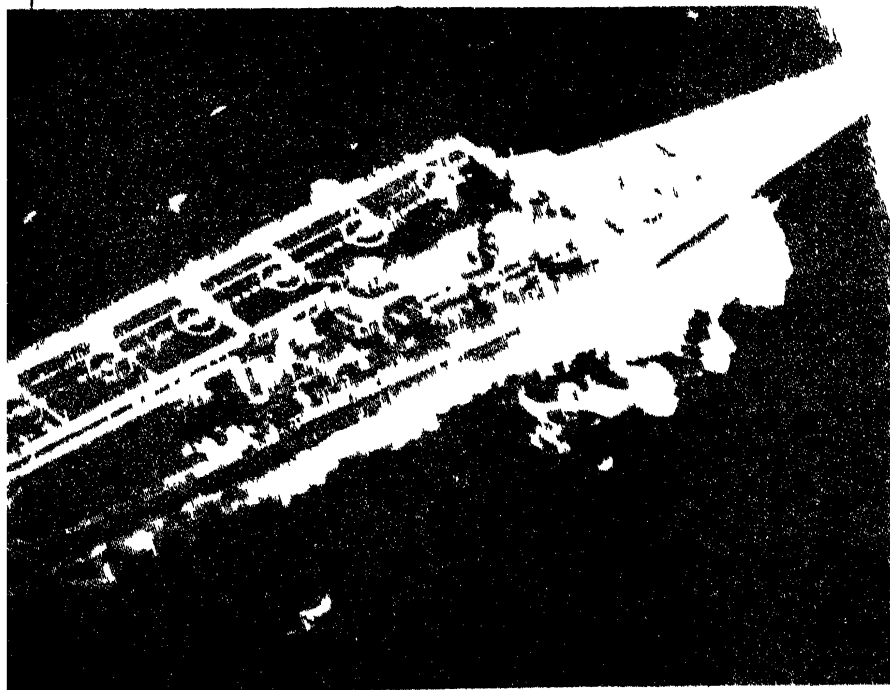
ernment to grant a measure of autonomy to the Tamils. What guarantee is there that the same exercise will not be repeated all over again? Mr Balasingham's reply is "The TULF is a parliamentary party. We are structurally different in that we are a political military organisation. When Jayewardene went back on his promise in 1984, there was nothing that the TULF could do. If he plays the same game now, we are not helpless. We will resume our guerilla operations. And it would be clear to all that Jayewardene is not sincere in granting autonomy to the Tamils and that he is embroiled in a crisis of his making."

Anita Pratap, Madras

INDIAN OCEAN

Cold War in Warm Waters

Military build-up by superpowers despite UN declaration



A Russian aircraft carrier enters the Indian Ocean

The question of neutralisation of the Indian Ocean area was mentioned in the joint statement issued at the end of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's recent visit to the Soviet Union. The joint communique expressed support for the UN General Assembly decision to "convene without delay a conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace." The non-aligned states were in favour of this even in 1971.

The UN declaration that the Indian

Ocean should be recognised as a zone of peace only exists on paper. The two super powers who have the key to the problem were not in any mood to oblige the promoters of the peace zone concept as their respective interests led to the build up. The USA has never made any secret of its vital economic and military interests that are at stake in the Indian Ocean region. The USA has to protect its friends in the region as well as a major trade route as it gets almost 40

per cent of its oil supplies from West Asia. The question of dismantling its sprawling naval complex in the area does not arise.

The entire Western bloc's thinking on the matter is clearly reflected in the statement made by Colonel Jonathan Alford, deputy director of the London based International Institute for Strategic Studies. He said, "zone of peace are nice little abstractions that bear little relation to the realities of international politics as they are today. Insulation from the main currents of superpower politics is just not possible."

The military build up in Diego Garcia by the USA was an excuse for the Soviet Union to maintain a strong presence in the Indian Ocean. The Soviet Union has made it clear that it also has friends and dependants to care for. The Soviet naval build up cannot be compared to that of the US but even the USA is aware that a build up in Diego Garcia would compel the Soviet Union to strengthen its presence.

The most disquieting aspect, however, is the attitude of some of India's neighbours. Sri Lanka, for instance, along with India had initiated the move at the UN to neutralise the Indian Ocean but has shifted its position. It is believed that the Sri Lankan President, Junius Jayewardene, along with President Zia ul Haq of Pakistan feels that "the Indian Ocean peace zone concept was idealistic and if implemented would make the Indian Ocean an 'Indian lake'." Professor Joel Larus of the New York University also believes that "the zone of peace proposal was a joint Indo-Soviet proposal." With the Soviet Union in a bargaining position, the recent Indo-Soviet joint statement on the issue is likely to pave the way for some new development.

Bhola Chatterjee, Calcutta

Lost Abroad

At times when the national capital region plan and Delhi's revised masterplan are being widely discussed, the person who could be called one of the founding fathers of both plans, has been forgotten. But this is not the first time that 55-year old Syed S. Shafi, former chief town and country planner of the government, has gone unrecognised for his work—at home. Disgusted by the bureaucratic manner in which the country's planning organisations are run, Shafi quit his job with the Delhi Development Authority two years ago, to take up a two-year assignment in Saudi Arabia for the redevelopment of the



Syed S. Shafi: out of town

holy city of Mecca for Muslims. In 1960, the government had deputed Shafi to work for the United Nations in Iraq to advise the authorities there on the planning of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra. He had served several states as the president of the Indian Institute of Town Plan-

ners. But later, Shafi's warnings of the pathetic state of town planning went largely unheeded. In his own words, he had to "fight tooth and nail" for the implementation of developmental concepts of planning in the capital. Now Shafi is off again—this time on an eight-week visit to the United States and Japan to deliver a series of lectures on urban planning. It is a pity that after fighting for the preservation of Delhi for the last 30 years, a seasoned country planner like Shafi should be forced to use his talents for the development of other cities. After all, it is in India, where metropolitan towns are fast heading towards "planned anarchy" that his skills are needed most.

The Advertising 'Bill'

There is little, they say, that William "Bill" Phillips has not excelled in. Tennis, golf, skiing...and of course, advertising. The chairman and chief executive of the Ogilvy group and chairman of Ogilvy and Mather Worldwide had to be a man of special qualities—of which David Ogilvy makes sure.

Phillips, who is popularly known as Bill, joined Ogilvy and Mather in 1959 and 22 years later, became its chairman and chief executive. In the second week of June, following the footsteps of David Ogilvy who came to New Delhi during the Asian Advertising Congress a few years ago, Bill was here to attend the international training programme of Ogilvy and Mather held in Srinagar from 9 to 18 June. He also presented an audio-visual show to invitees from the world of business at New Delhi's Hyatt Regency Hotel. And for those still negotiating the rungs of advertising, Bill had a little piece of advice *a la* David Ogilvy.

"If we failed to train, we would have failed to learn from the past. We would have failed to exploit the present and we would have failed to prepare ourselves for the future."

One that Got Away

The tirade launched by the three famous dancers, Yamini Krishnamurti, Sonal Mansingh and Uma Sharma, against the organisers of the Festival of India in France and America paid its dividends for at least one of them. A few days after the press conference in which Yamini Krishnamurti had spearheaded the attack on the officials for not including the three dancers for the festivals, she was handed an invitation to



Sharma, Krishnamurthi and Mansingh: three's a crowd

perform for the Paris festival by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations. She was scheduled to give seven performances in Paris beginning from 21 June. Despite her earlier show of solidarity for the dancers' common cause,

she departed for Paris. A beaming Yamini Krishnamurthi left to dance her way into the hearts of audiences in Paris. For her it was a deserved victory—even if Sonal Mansingh and Uma Sharma could not eventually make it.

Administrative Tonic

Andhra Pradesh's chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao is trying to steal a march over Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in toning up his administration. While Rajiv Gandhi has been talking of the need to streamline the central government and make it more efficient, NTR has decided to improve the efficiency of his government, right away. He has commis-

sioned the services of the renowned management consultant and author, M.K. Rustomji, to review existing administrative

M.K. Rustomji: Dr Efficiency

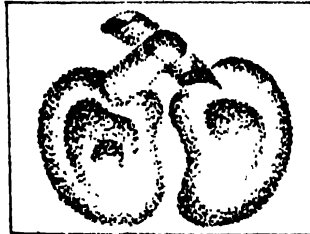


standards in his state—to find out if it subserves the needs of the people efficiently. Mr Rustomji will examine how well public complaints are attended to. He will recommend suitable measures to improve standards of operation and also suggest how a proper work ethos, which rewards hard work, innovativeness, initiative and efficiency, while effectively deterring inefficiency can be developed.

Rustomji will have to

submit his report in six months and has got together a team of seven people, including a few retired chief secretaries of Andhra Pradesh. The Andhra Pradesh government presently has a total staff of seven lakh employees. Rustomji initially considered bringing out full page advertisements in the Andhra Pradesh newspapers reminding government servants that they are the servants of the public, and not vice versa.

Heart of Steel

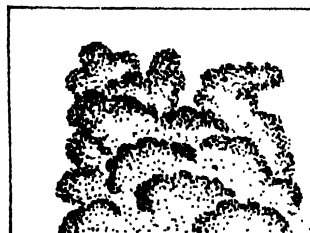


Japanese researchers have developed a battery powered artificial heart that can be built into a recipient's body enabling users to move freely. The new heart has plastic ventricles on both sides of a stainless-steel cylindrical drum with a motor and piston rods that push and pull compression plates in the drum, pumping blood in and out as in a natural heart. The recipient would carry a large storage battery on a belt to charge the smaller battery built into the body that would drive the motor. The interior battery could drive the motor for only a few hours. The new artificial heart can automatically control its rate, depending on whether the recipient is motionless or walking, by measuring enzymes in the blood with an optical sensor.

The Cure for Hypertension

Can calcium, the main mineral found in milk and hard water, help to prevent high blood pressure? An American specialist believes it can, lending new support to the eroded slogan that milk is good for you. Prof. David McCarron of Oregon Health Sciences University has studied the computerised records of 10,000 people in the US aged between 18 and 74 to test his theory that there is a direct link between the amount of calcium we consume and the likelihood of suffering hypertension. His research has found that people suffering from hypertension were consuming between 18 and 22 per cent less calcium than those with normal blood pressure. Another significant breakthrough is the discovery that the areas served by soft water produced more hypertension than those with hard water.

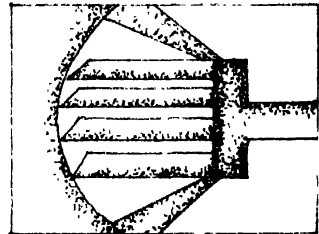
Algae: Genetic Engineers



Blue-green algae are said to be among the oldest and toughest life forms on earth. It is presumed that these threads of red, green and blue dominated life in the oceans 600 million years ago, even before fossils began to be laid down. They can even flourish in the bleakest of natural environments and as they can fix their own nitrogen, their nutritional requirements are minimal.

It has now been discovered that these organisms can engineer and restructure their own nitrogen-fixing genes, by gathering inactive nitrogen from the air. What is of special importance to the genetic engineers is the way these organisms biochemically exclude oxygen from the cells. Scientists can now hope to reduce the costly fertiliser requirements of crop plants by substituting the process of natural nitrogen-fixing of the plant kingdom.

Ensuring Copter Safety

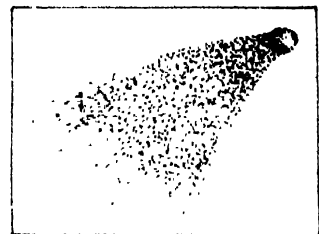


A new kind of rotor that can constantly check itself to ensure all is well will soon bring extra safety to the helicopter, predicts the Westland helicopter company in England. The rotor is probably the most important part of a helicopter and has been the subject of much research to try and reduce the possibility of rotor failures. Rotor life and reliability have been greatly increased by the use of carbon fibre, reinforced plastics and other composites. Programmes now on hand will develop the idea and take it to the stage where a self-interrogating rotor will become a reality. Fibre optic gauges could be built into any part of the rotor and would be used to constantly check the strains being put on that part of the rotor and to give early warning that such strains are reaching a dangerous level. There has been a change in the traditional shape of the rotor blades—the latest blades look more like paddles. Used with special aerofoil sections, the blade provides substantially greater thrust and extends the forward speed potential of the rotor to well in excess of 200 knots.

Lipocortin: The Effective Agent

A method of producing a novel substance with the potential for treating inflammatory diseases such as arthritis and asthma, has been discovered by scientists at the Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts. The preparation, lipocortin, is one of the family of rare human proteins which the defence system of the body produces under certain circumstances. Because lipocortin is generated naturally by the body to fight inflammation, it has the potential of being an effective therapeutic agent that avoids undesirable side effects associated with substances synthesised in the laboratory. But only tiny amounts of the material have been available for study. Scientists have now developed a way of making enough lipocortin, by genetic engineering techniques.

Shooting Through the Ages



New information about Halley's Comet has been discovered in Babylonian clay tablets in the British museum. Up to now, little was known about the history of the famous comet before 12 BC. But the inscribed clay tablets mention its appearance in the sky as far back as 164 BC. This discovery is the work of scientists in Britain and Austria, who report in *Nature* that the records should help astronomers study the evolution of the comet's orbit. The comet returns to the inner solar system every 75 to 80 years and should be easily visible again this November. It will be intercepted by several space probes in March 1986.

BEGINNING 30 JUNE 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May)

Officers and company executives may come in for a lot of criticism from their superiors. Businessmen should avoid speculation. The atmosphere at home will remain peaceful but guard your health closely. This is not the opportune time for marriage. Poets, novelists and those connected with the fine arts will be successful during this lucky phase.

Good dates 30, 1 and 4

Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 5

Favourable direction North west



LEO (15 August—14 September)

If you are unemployed there are chances that you will find a job this week and those employed will get better opportunities. Businessmen however should be wary of deception. Lovers should refrain from taking hasty decisions. At home your children will be demanding. An elderly member of your family will cause concern.

Good dates 2, 4 and 6

Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 9

Favourable direction East



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January)

This is a good phase for creative artists and students. Professionals will make steady headway and businessmen should utilise opportunities that come their way. Some of you will gain through inheritance but on the domestic front you will have to shoulder additional responsibilities. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans.

Good dates 2, 3 and 4

Lucky numbers 2, 6 and 7

Favourable direction South



TAURUS (15 May—14 June)

For those in love this is the right time to solve in-sunder standings and women are likely to get married during this phase. This is also a favourable period for businessmen and professionals who will be rewarded for their work. Do not hesitate to seek favours from affluent persons. Friends and relatives will be very helpful. But guard your health.

Good dates 1, 2 and 5

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 6

Favourable direction South



VIRGO (15 September—14 October)

The stars are particularly favourable for those in service but avoid taking hasty decisions regarding your career. The period is also favourable for sportmen. Some of you may win a lottery. A domestic problem which had been bothering you for quite some time will be solved this week. Watch out for a pleasant surprise.

Good dates 30, 3 and 6

Lucky numbers 2, 6 and 7

Favourable direction North



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February)

This is a good phase for marriage negotiations but do not neglect your health. Friends and relatives will be of immense help in your journey which you were looking forward to for the offing. Women are likely to receive expensive gifts of jewellery and clothing. However, your financial prospects are not too bright.

Good dates 30, 1 and 4

Lucky numbers 3 and 7

Favourable direction North east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July)

This is not a good week for love and marriage negotiations. Businessmen should guard against deception. However, the week is favourable for dealing with property matters. Those above 42 should take care of their health and diet. Women will contribute to your happiness this week. Children should take interest in studies. A very lucky week for sportmen. A short pleasure trip is in the offing.

Good dates 2, 3 and 6

Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 7

Favourable direction East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November)

This is a good week for businessmen and you will make steady progress on the professional front. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. A letter will bring good tidings. Avoid quarrelling with your family members. Enemies will be active and your health will add to your worries. At home your children may be demanding but deal with them sympathetically.

Good dates 30, 1 and 4

Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 8

Favourable direction South east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March)

At last finances make this a bleak period for all of you. Lovers should postpone marriage plans and businessmen are advised to put off all major deals this week. On the professional front you may face opposition from your colleagues. Do not overstrain yourself as this may have an adverse effect on your health. Pleasant surprises are in store for students.

Good dates 1, 4 and 5

Lucky numbers 4, 5 and 6

Favourable direction West



CANCER (15 July—14 August)

This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen and speculators. Their services will be promoted or transferred to a place of their liking. The domestic front will remain inspiring and your financial position will improve. The period is equally favourable for love and marriage. However, do not involve yourself in legal matters. A letter will bring good tidings.

Good dates 1, 3 and 5

Lucky numbers 4, 5 and 8

Favourable direction South west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December)

Students intending to go abroad for higher studies will benefit from this lucky period. A job is in the offing for the unemployed. Your financial status will improve. But this is not a favourable period for lovers. However, this is a good time for performing artists. Your health will show signs of improvement but avoid spicy food.

Good dates 1, 5 and 6

Lucky numbers 3, 5 and 9

Favourable direction North



PISCES (15 March—14 April)

Since this is not a good week financially, avoid speculation. Businessmen should go in for new investments but those in service may suffer heavy losses. A change of residence is likely. Students will come out with flying colours in the examinations. The weekend will see you busy with social engagements. Do not neglect your health and avoid spicy food.

Good dates 2, 3 and 6

Lucky numbers 2, 8 and 9

Favourable direction South

For those born between 15 June and 14 July

You are sociable by nature and you love to be surrounded by friends and relatives. However, most of the relationships are rather superficial. You have inborn literary talents and you will do well if you take up teaching or journalism as your profession. Some of you are also adventurous and you like to take up challenging assignments. A word of caution for all of you: do not let your heart rule over your head. Women born during this phase are usually fair and they make good housewives.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



PUNE: A cashier of a private firm, who lodged a complaint with the Swargate police claiming that he had been robbed of Rs 78,000 was arrested recently. The police searched his house and found the money in an empty water tank above the toilet. The cashier in his complaint said that somebody threw *chilli* powder in his eyes while he was travelling on his scooter and snatched the briefcase containing the money. A medical examination showed no trace of *chilli* powder in his eyes or any where on his person, the police said, adding that on the contrary, a packet of the powder was found in his pockets—*The Statesman* (Y. S. Murty, R. Udayagiri)

VIJAYAWADA: Cross country trekking is an adventure for some, but for 25-year-old Sudhakar Rao of Bangalore who landed in a local police station, it seemed to be a ploy just to bilk people. Fluent in English, winsome in manners and appearing to belong to a well-to-do family, Sudhakar Rao told the police that he started from Bangalore on 22 April with the ambition of trekking 35,000 km. After touching Salem, Nayveli, Chidambaram, Madras, Nellore, Ongole, Guntur and meeting high officials like district collectors and superintendents of police en route and enjoying their hospitality, he approached a sub-inspector of police here who arranged him free boarding and lodging. Sudhakar was also felicitated for his spirit of adventure by social clubs in a posh hotel. After a few days, when he said he would go to Eluru the sub-inspector who suspected Sudhakar's bonafides asked one of his constables to follow the trekking enthusiast. The constable found to his chagrin that Sudhakar,

after a few drinks at a bar, went to the town bus station, purchased a ticket to Eluru and boarded the non-stop bus. Brought back to the police station, the sub-inspector took him to task for duping people. On being questioned Sudhakar said he had failed in a love affair and run away from home—*The Hindu* (T. V. Ravi, Madras)

BOMBAY: A scribe, specialising in writing crime stories for a Hindi magazine, staged a real life crime drama by looting the Oriental Bank of Commerce of Rs 4.17 lakhs in the northern suburb of Borivli on May 3. The writer and his gang of nine persons looted the bank at the point of knives and pistols. The gangsters, who escaped in a taxi, were subsequently traced by the police. The writer and four members of his gang had been arrested. According to the police, the writer hatched the plan with necessary tips from an employee of the bank whose services were terminated last month. The police have recovered Rs 65,000 from the arrested persons—*The Searchlight* (Gautam Sinha, Patna)

JAMMU: An undaunted bride's refusal to marry the person craving for more dowry landed the groom and his father in police custody in Badyala Chak village near Akhnour. A *barat* of over 70 persons had also to return disappointed when the bride, Shakuntala Devi, refused to marry the groom who had come a long way from Gurdaspur. The groom and his father were arrested by the police when the matter was reported by the bride's father. Another young man married the bride before the sacred fire without any dowry—*Kashmir Times* (A. Joglekar, Srinagar)

NEW DELHI: A roadside Romeo who let his passions run away with him while making anonymous calls to a young woman in Vasant Vihar has landed in custody. Rahul Gupta repeatedly harassed the woman with obscene calls. But soon he got bolder and asked the woman to meet him near a *paan* shop in the Super Bazar market in Munirka. The woman readily agreed in a bid to identify the nuisance and report the matter to the police. She left for the place at the appointed time, with her husband and brother-in-law following at a discreet distance. The eve-teaser came along half-an-hour late, revealed his name and started talking to her. Gradually, he grew bolder and held her hand. The husband and brother-in-law swung into action and caught hold of the man while he tried to get away—*The Hindustan Times* (N. C. Mallik, Pratapgarh)

WITHOUT COMMENT

I have to cope with many Congressmen in Punjab who are paralytic—they are half Congressmen, half Akali—Darbara Singh in *The Sunday Observer*

Millions of Sant Bhindranwales will be born, and they will fight for the freedom of the Sikhs and the creation of the Sikh nation—G. S. Dhullon in *Gentleman*

I am not a professional politician. My doors are open to all. There is no lobby in my house, not to speak of a lobby in the city (Allahabad)—Amitabh Bachchan in *Current*

I am not interested in a role as first lady...My husband's duty is to the country, and mine is to the family—Sonia Gandhi, quoted in *The International Herald Tribune*

Selling the idea is the most important thing and for that I'd meet anybody in the government, I am willing to *salaam* anyone—Dhirubhai Ambani in *India Today*



There was no India before the British came. There will be no India afterwards—A. Z. Phizo in *The Statesman*

A government is not legitimate merely because it exists—Jeanne Kirkpatrick, former US ambassador to the UN, on the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, in *Time*

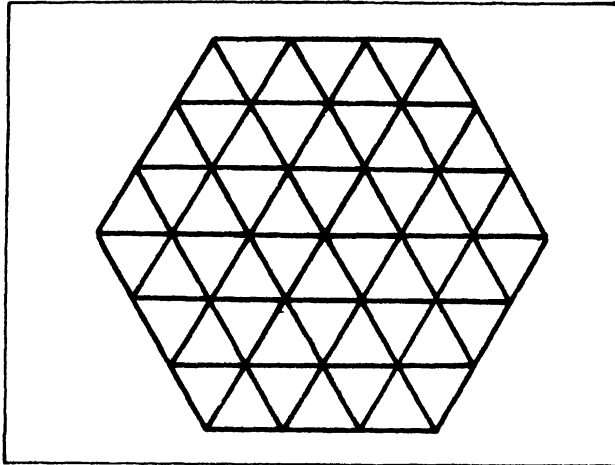
Lata (Mangeshkar) is like the *Bhagwad Gita* and Nazia (Hassan) a daily newspaper. *Bhagwad Gita* is to be preserved, to be paid homage to, but a newspaper is to be read and thrown away—Music director Kalyanji in *Movie*

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

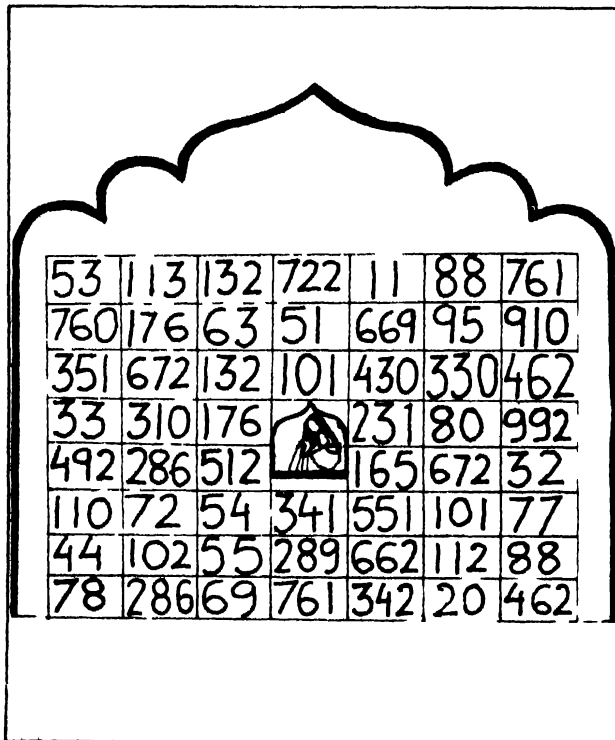
Shape Sleuth

Have you found the total number of hexagons inside this figure?



If you want to get into a further tizzy, try counting the number of triangles of various sizes. Don't forget to let us know!

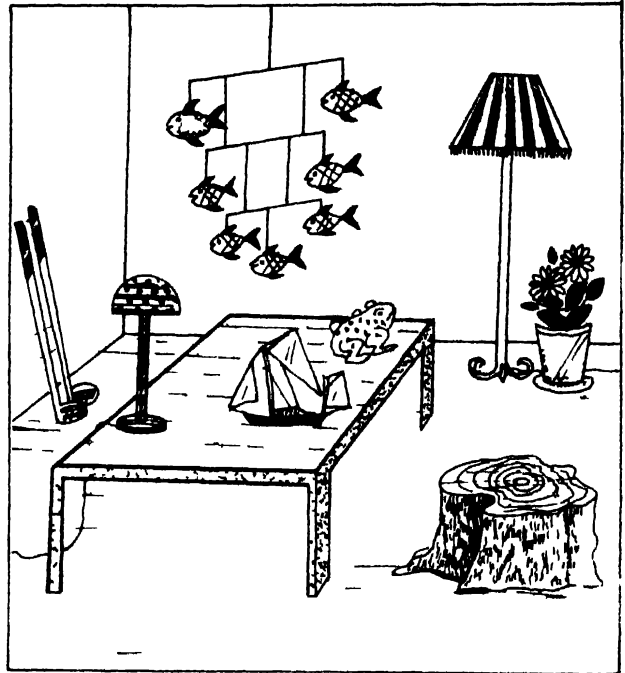
Figure it Out



Can you find a way out for the princess who has been trapped inside the palace of numbers? She can step only into the rooms which have multiples of 11 written in them

Word Power

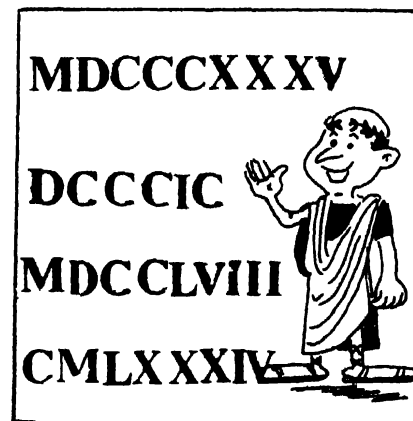
The table can serve another purpose as well



If you fill in the words correctly in the blanks, the first letters of these words will spell out what tables can do!

Balanced hanging _____
Run Ed, and mix up _____
They throw light _____
Not a frog! _____
Clubs _____
A pot holder _____
Wooden part from umbrella _____
A jolly boat _____
All the words pertain to the illustration above

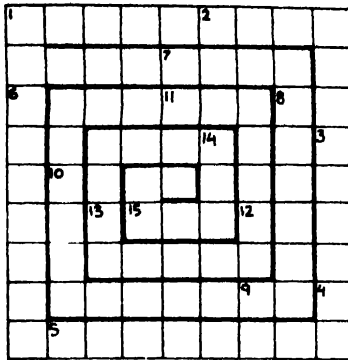
Quick Think



How quickly can you read these Roman Numbers?

TEASERS

Word Play



Fill in the spiral, from the words given below. One letter goes into one square, and the last letter of one word will be the first letter of the next word. For example, if the word beginning square No. 1 is GOVERN, the next word beginning at square No. 2, would be a seven-letter word beginning with N. But watch out, there are other combinations which could fit in.

NIL, DOWNY, REIGN, SWANS, BORROW, ERRAND, GOVERN, SAILOR, SPRING, NAPKINS, WEAPONS, YAWNING, TRICYCLE, GREATNESS, STEADFAST.

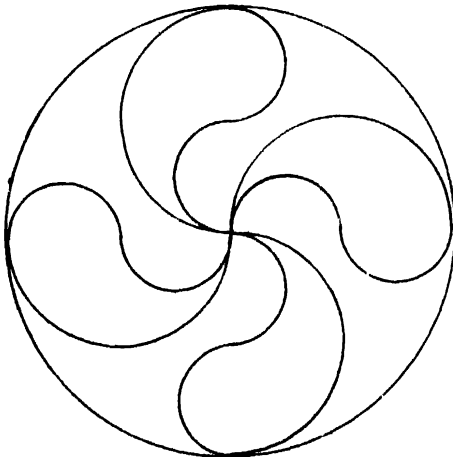
Wit Sharpener

A man is offered two jobs. The first offers a salary of Rs 1,000 a month, and the second offers a salary of 1 p on the first day, 2 p on the second day, double that on the third day, and so on for the first 15 days. Then, his salary reverts to 1 p on the 16th day, 2 p on the next, and doubling the amount every day, till the end of the month. Then, it reverts back to 1 p, 2 p, etc.

Which job should he take?

His friend, who is a qualified engineer, gets offers from both these firms as well. The first firm offers him Rs 6,000 and the second firm offers him the same arrangement, starting with 1 p on the first, day, and doubling each day, till the 20th day, and then reverting to 1 p and so on. Which job should he take: the first or the second?

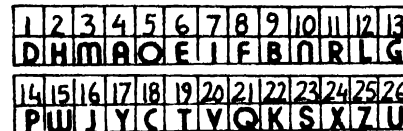
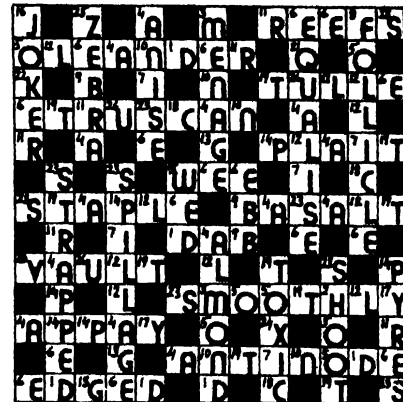
Mind Bender



If the circumference of this wrought iron window is two metres, what length of wrought iron has been used to make this entire pattern?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Cryptocross:



Letter Lines:

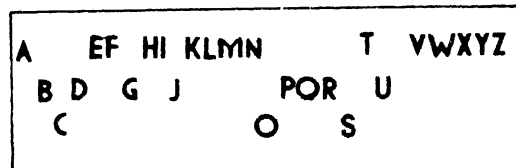
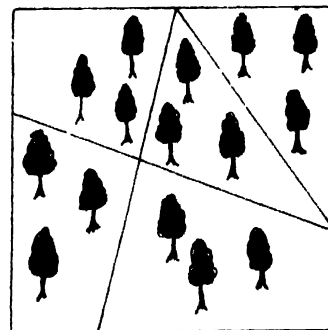


Figure it Out:



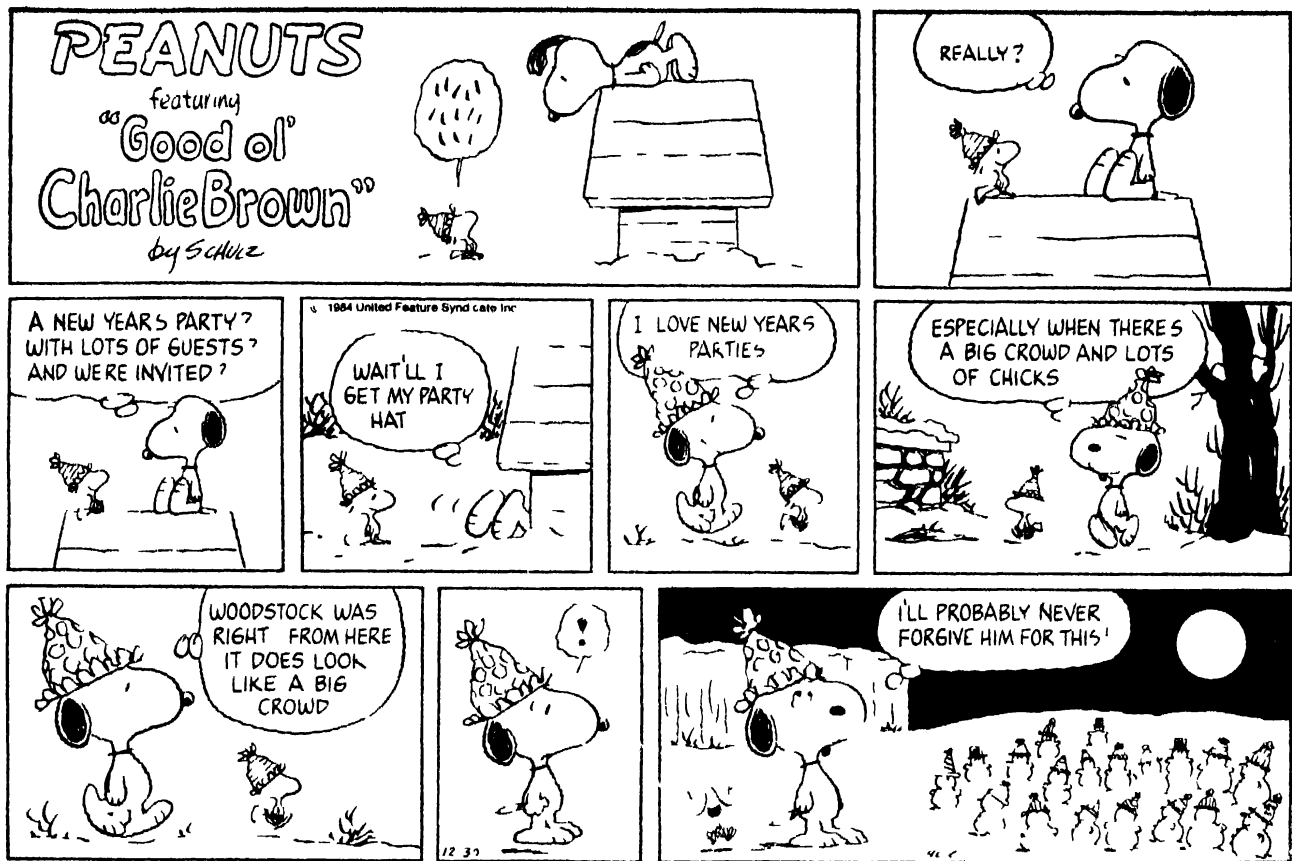
What's in a Word: Indian

What's in a Word: Both the words have two meanings each, one exactly the opposite of the other. CLEAVE means "to adhere" or "stick" and also "to split" or "separate." NYCTALOPIA means "night-blindness" or "the ability to see at night."

Quick Think: VI - II = IV

Witsharpener: Figure d Mindbender:





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VARIETY

CHLSS

There is a certain breed of player who sees his pieces as acrobats rather than warriors. When all the tactical tumbles and strategic somersaults end in success, showers of gold coins and exclamation marks abound, yet when they fail we wonder how a grandmaster can play so miserably.

Fortunately those of the ilk of Yugoslav grandmaster Dragoljub Velimirović are not deterred by the occasional setback. Pioneer of the famous Velimirović Attack against the Sicilian, he is quoted as having learnt that system from his mother. His role in the following game is an achievement a less modest practitioner might also attempt to ascribe to her.

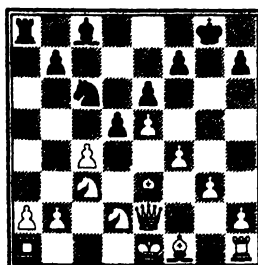
White: M Drasko Black: D Velimirović
English Opening Yugoslav 1984

1 N-KB3 N-KB3 2 P-QB4 P-QB4
3 P-KN3 N-B3 4 P-Q4 PxP
5 NxP P-K3 6 N-QB3 Q-N3
7 N-N3 N-K4

Already plumping for a system which relies heavily on tactical counterplay 7 P-Q4? is an enterprising alternative popular of late.

8 P-K4 B-N5 9 Q-K2

Velimirović (Black)



Drasko (White) to move

Though White's development looks artificial, he is well placed to repulse Black's early invaders.

9 P-QR4

Threatening P-R5-R6, but theory rightly frowns upon this move.

10 P-B4 N-B3 11 B-K3 Q-Q1
12 N-Q2 O-O 13 P-K5 P-Q4??!

DIAGRAM

An amazing counter thrust which, if it

worked, would be hailed as a stroke of genius. Alas such acclamation will have to wait for another game.

14 PxN P-Q5 15 N(2)-K4!

Unfortunately for Black this wins by force.

15 PxB 16 Q-N4 P-KN3
17 Q-N5

Disarmingly simple Black, somewhat surprisingly, cannot stop a straightforward mating attack.

17 R-K1 18 P-QB5!

The key move Black's bishop is denied a route home. If now 18 N-Q5 to defend from B4, simply 19 O-O leaves Black with insoluble problems.

18 K-R1 19 Q-R6 R-KN1

20 R-Q1

The enthusiastic 21 N-N5 would be premature in view of 21 Q-Q7 mate.

20 N-Q5

Equivalent to resignation, but 20 Q-B1 fails sweetly to 21 N-N5 QxQ 22 NxP mate.
21 N-N5 Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

The jack of hearts on this deal was a tempter. See how it caused the declarer to misplay his contract of 6NT.

Dealer South Love all

♠ 9 7 5 3
♥ A 9 8 5
♦ A 10
♣ A K 2
♠ Q led
♦ A K 2
♥ K J
♦ K Q 6
♣ Q J 5 4 3

West led the queen of spades against 6NT and South won with the king. He led a club to the ace and had a shock when West showed out, discarding a spade.

Two questions arise: how should South play now, and is the contract guaranteed?

A heart to the jack seemed to provide good chances - but not good enough for the full hand was

♠ 9 7 5 3
♥ A 9 8 5
♦ A 10
♣ A K 2
♠ Q J 10 8 6
♥ Q 10 7 4
♦ J 8 4 3
♣ —
N E
W S
♠ A K 2
♥ K J
♦ K Q 6
♣ Q J 5 4 3
♠ 4
♥ 6 3 2
♦ 9 7 5 2
♣ 10 9 8 7 6

The heart finesse lost and a heart was returned. West had control of both major suits now, but there is no squeeze because after the winners in diamonds and clubs have been played off the declarer has no entry to dummy.

Imagine that South's hearts had been K x instead of K J. It would surely have occurred to him to rectify the count for a squeeze by ducking a round of spades. Then dummy's fourth spade is a menace against West, the fifth club a menace against East. South can claim the contract without playing another card.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- The young of which fish is called parr, smolt or grise?
- Which is the largest lake in India?
- Which is the odd one out and why? *The Laughing Cavalier Luncheon on the Grass, The Burghers of Calais, Guernica and The Last Supper?*
- The first flight over North Pole was made on 9 May 1926. Name the pilot.
- In the *Mahabharata*, one of Dhritarashtra's sons joined the Pandavas just before the great battle. Name him.
- The oldest stock exchange in the world was founded in 1602. Where?
- With which event in athletics do you associate the name of Grete Waitz?
- How is Narendranath Dutta, a great social reformer and sage better known as?
- Which south American city is served

by Viracopos airport?

- What do the following have in common: Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, James Tobin, Joseph Schumpeter and Milton Friedman?
- Cathleen Collins is a famous American film-actress. What is her screen name?
- Name the sacred well in Mecca in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard of the Kaaba which is said to have been dug by the angel Gabriel?
- Which Irish nationalist leader was known as the 'Uncrowned king of Ireland'?
- Name the French novelist born in Algeria whose works include *The Plague*, *Caligula* and *The Fall*.
- What do the initials ASEAN stand for?
- The absence of which vitamin leads

to night blindness?

- Salmon
- Lake Wular in Jammu and Kashmir
- The Burghers of Calais* is a piece of sculpture by Auguste Rodin. The others are famous paintings.
- Richard E. Byrd
- Juventus
- Amsterdam
- The Marathon
- Swami Vivekananda
- Sao Paulo in Brazil
- They are all economists.
- Bo Derek
- The Zerk
- Charles Stewart Parnell
- Albert Camus
- The Association of South East Asian Nations
- Vitamin A

ANSWERS

Although, till now, none of its stars have departed from the serial in search of the greener pastures of Hindi films, that movie star laden show, *Khandaan*, is losing much of its initial interest. Even its glittering array of screen names, from Rohini Hattangadi to Gulish Karnad and Dr Shreeram Lagoo, can't seem to prevent the series from dragging. Director Shridhar Kshirsagar will need to inject some more pep into



Dr Lagoo

the proceedings instead of simply relying on glamorous props and locales, if he wants to stop the Indian *Dynasty* from fading away.

The gripping detective serial, *Old Fox* from German television, which was shown regularly some months ago on Bombay Doordarshan was suddenly and inexplicably withdrawn. Viewers who have been pining for it need no longer console themselves with the inept Indian version, *Apradhi Kaun*? Now they can look forward to seeing the real thing. *Old Fox*, that canny old detective who solves the most intricate murder mysteries, will soon be entertaining suspense buffs on the second channel where it will be replacing *Living Planet* from July.

Hot Tracks, another slick presentation by Vimal's Mudiya Videotex, promises to deliver the cream of the melody world to us every alternate Friday. It will be a 30 minute programme playing the most popular international all numbers by chart

The Small Screen

toppers such as Lionel Richie, Michael Jackson, Prince, Duran Duran, Billy Joel and Cyndi Lauper among others.

For those who are wondering how Nadira Babbar has been taking all those rumours about husband Raj having married his flame of two years, Smita Patil, she isn't wasting time sitting around moping. Apart from plans to direct a film, Nadira is making a TV serial, *Titliyaan* with the star of *Hip Hip Hurray*, Nikhil Bhagat in the lead. Capable director that Nadira is, she is sure to make as big a success of *Titliyaan* as she has of all those plays she has directed.

That so called mystery serial *Apradhi Kaun* with its obscure plots and puzzling denouncements, has finally made an exit from the TV scene, to the accompaniment of sighs of relief from viewers. "It couldn't have been too soon," is the general consensus. There is a hope that Sunday's boring, meaningless *Paying Guest* will soon follow suit and go the *Apradhi Kaun* way. It is a serial which will definitely not be missed.



Tanuja



Priya Tendulkar and Baby Guddi (left) in *Rajani*

The success of Priya Tendulkar's *Rajani* has triggered off a whole spate of imitations. The latest is a serial called *Janaki Jasoos* in which the title role is being played by the dusky Meena Paliwal under the direction of her mate mentor Hari Atma. Rohini Hattangadi's husband, Jaydev, also has a role in the serial. Whether it clicks like *Rajani* did remains to be seen.

While cinematic 3 D continues to enthrall movie goers, on the small screen the effect is far from spectacular. In spite of all the uproar over the new 3 D TV, those who have seen it say it's no thing to write home about. Moreover, the coloured glasses which viewers have to wear hurt the eyes. "It's just a con-game," muttered one dissatisfied viewer.

That growingly popular game show, *Couple of Questions*, produced by Kurwan Sinha, has now

got a sponsor—Oil of Olay. This light hearted programme, which features three well known couples in a question and answer session revolving around their likes and dislikes, seems to have caught the fancy of the viewers. Let's hope Kurwan can keep up the good work.

A lot of people agree that *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* has lost a lot of its punch since stars Shafi Inamdar and Swaroop Sampat departed from the scene. Swaroop's exit in particular (the explanation given was that she had gone to join her husband in the Gulf), has left behind a decided vacuum which even Farida Jalal's jolly exuberance is hard put to fill. One can recall that Ravi Baswani's departure from *Idhar Udhar* left behind a similar hiatus. Perhaps future producers who wish to cast film actors (no matter how small time) in their serials, would do well to place them under contract to keep them from disappearing half-way through.

VARIETY/KHAAS BAAT

Zeenat Aman seems to be facing trouble on all fronts. Her affair with Mazhar Khan, who is many years her junior and the husband of Rubina, a niece of Dilip Kumar, has fallen on bad days. Mazhar had taken the place of the Italian Frank Norris ("without whom I cannot live and whose child I would love to have") in

all this is happening to me at this stage of my career. I felt things would look up but now all seems to be going wrong," says a bewildered Zeenat.

"The cabaret and disco girl" Kalpana Iyer, is attempting a change of image "to save the actress in me." Her first attempt in Amjad's *Ameer Aadmi*

the top by a number of young aspirants. Forced to look for something else, Sachin has finally found his place in Marathi films. Besides being a very popular actor in, and a successful director of Marathi films, he has been making a few Hindi films too. But such films have remained largely insignificant. "They did not make any

Amjad Khan, the film maker, appears to be down in the dumps these days. The first film he made, *Choi Police*, was badly mauled by the censors. However, the hue and cry raised by Amjad over this did not help the film to do well at the box office. Though the censors were very kind to his next film, *Ameer Aadmi Gharib*



Kalpna Iyer: a change of image

Jayant Das

Zeenat's life. His wife is now threatening divorce and his family is also troubled over the issue. The careers of Zeenat and Mazhar are also in a sorry state. Zeenat has had a number of flops of late and her first double role in *Yaadon ki Kasam* has not helped boost her declining career. "I don't know why

Gharib Aadmi has failed to make an impact. Her next chance is as the heroine of *Kanoon Kanoon Hai*. Will this film see the light of day?

Sachin, once considered "hot property," with only Rishi Kapoor as his competitor, has been left far behind in the race to



Zeenat Aman with Frank Norris: bad times

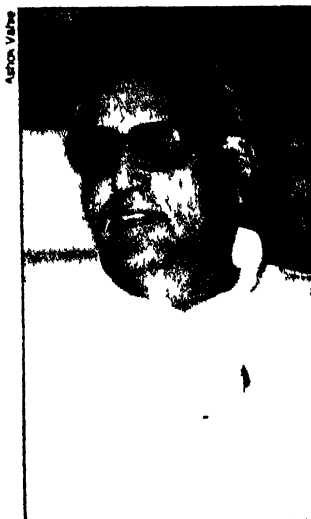
Deepak Mehta

difference to my career but they helped me to know what was happening in the world of Hindi films. I did not make money there but I didn't mind. I was happy with what I was doing in Marathi films. He has finally decided to marry Supriya Sabnis, one of his heroines on the Marathi screen.

Aadmi which was completed with great difficulty, the audience just didn't take to it and Amjad was pained. The only man who can help him now is good friend Amitabh Bachchan—by agreeing to act in his *Lamban Chowdai*. "If Amjad is facing a crisis, Amitabh will come to his help," says a close source.

Sugar Power

The sugar lobby in Maharashtra is jubilant. The installation of Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar as the successor to Vasantdada Patil as chief minister has demonstrated that the sugar barons are still in control of the state's politics, despite attempts to break their monopoly. In the past, too, when the sugar lobby had been under pressure it always fought back. In 1980 when A.R. Antulay was made chief minister, he sought to buy peace with this lobby disbursing favours and carving out more districts. The Antulay reign was short-lived and Vasantdada Patil was reinstalled as the chief minister for a fourth time after the ouster of Antulay. After becoming the chief minister, Vasantdada Patil attempted to build a strong Maratha lobby, by buying the hatchet and making friends with the late Y.B. Chavan. The Patil-Chavan axis had the potential of roping in Sharad Pawar but the death of Y.B. Chavan



Vasantdada Patil

coupled with Pawar's ambitions in the opposition camp stalled the move. As things stand now, Pawar's bid to wrest the chief ministership has been torpedoed by Vasantdada Patil's sudden resignation move, which saw the emergence of Nilangekar as the new leader. Pawar, however, has not given up his ambition. Moreover, his leadership of the Progressive Democratic Front is being challenged by constituents

like the Janata Party and Peasants and Workers Party (PWP). Within the 54 member Congress(S) legislature party, there are people who took the *charkha* as their symbol but in reality they were nominees of the Shetkari Sangathana of Sharad Joshi or Congress(I) rebels like Suresh Jain. Around 20 members of Pawar's party may not cross the floor with him. The overriding factor in the game is the role being played by the industrialists of Bombay. They would prefer Sharad Pawar as the chief minister. Overtures have been made by some industrialists to Congress(S) leaders opposed to the "join the Congress(I)" move. They also approached Vasantdada Patil to seek his support for Pawar. Dada is said to have told them that he was prepared to support Pawar, provided he gave up the ambition of wresting power with the support of "Delhi's computers." If Pawar wants to be chief minister let the decision be taken in Bombay and not in Delhi, Dada told the emissaries.

Prediction of Doom

While Jammu and Kashmir is besieged with discontent due to lack of popular government in the state, the high priests of the Khirbhawani shrine, which is the holiest shrine for the Kashmiri pandits, have predicted bad days for the nation over the next year. The prediction was made on the basis of the colour of the water in the Khirbhawani spring as seen on 28 May, the annual *Jeth Ashtami* fair in the temple. The temple is located on a spring at Tulammulla, 25 km from Srinagar, in the Ganderbal region. Legend has it that on the *Jeth Ashtami* day, the colour of the spring water is blackish, then it means that there will be violent disturbances in the country over the next year. With the news of the holocaust in Bangladesh coming in on 28 May, coupled with reports from Gujarat and the threats in Punjab, it is difficult to discount the legend of Khirbhawani.

Good Company, Bad Company

Two public sector companies, the Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) and the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) are at loggerheads. NTPC has accused that some of its power projects have been supplied faulty turbogenerators by BHEL. A news agency circulated a report on the basis of NTPC's charge.

Within days, BHEL issued a press note to clarify its stand. According to BHEL, thermal power generation from indigenously built sets has exceeded the target set by the Central Electricity Authority

Raj Narain's Struggle

Raj Narain the man who defeated Indira Gandhi twice—once in an election petition (which led to the imposition of the Emergency) and once in an election—is now carrying on a unique struggle. The socialist leader is fighting for subsidised government accommodation. Having lost the Lok Sabha elections in 1980, for the last five years he was not entitled to a government bungalow. He shared the accommodation which was allotted to his erstwhile Socialist Party colleague, Maniram Bagri, who was an MP till December last. Due to Raj Narain's refusal



Raj Narain

to vacate the bungalow after Bagri had ceased to be a MP, the estate office had to evict him forcibly. But the incorrigible Raj Narain is squatting outside No. 6 Teen Murti Lane, the house occupied by him for the past few years. His contention is that if freedom fighters are given accommodation by the state, he too is a veteran of the 1942 movement. As a freedom fighter he may be entitled to many things, but should politicians who are unable to get the popular mandate insist on using governmental facilities? And why did Raj Narain wake up to the plight of the freedom fighters only when his own interests were at stake?

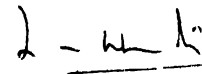
D.E. Nizamuddin

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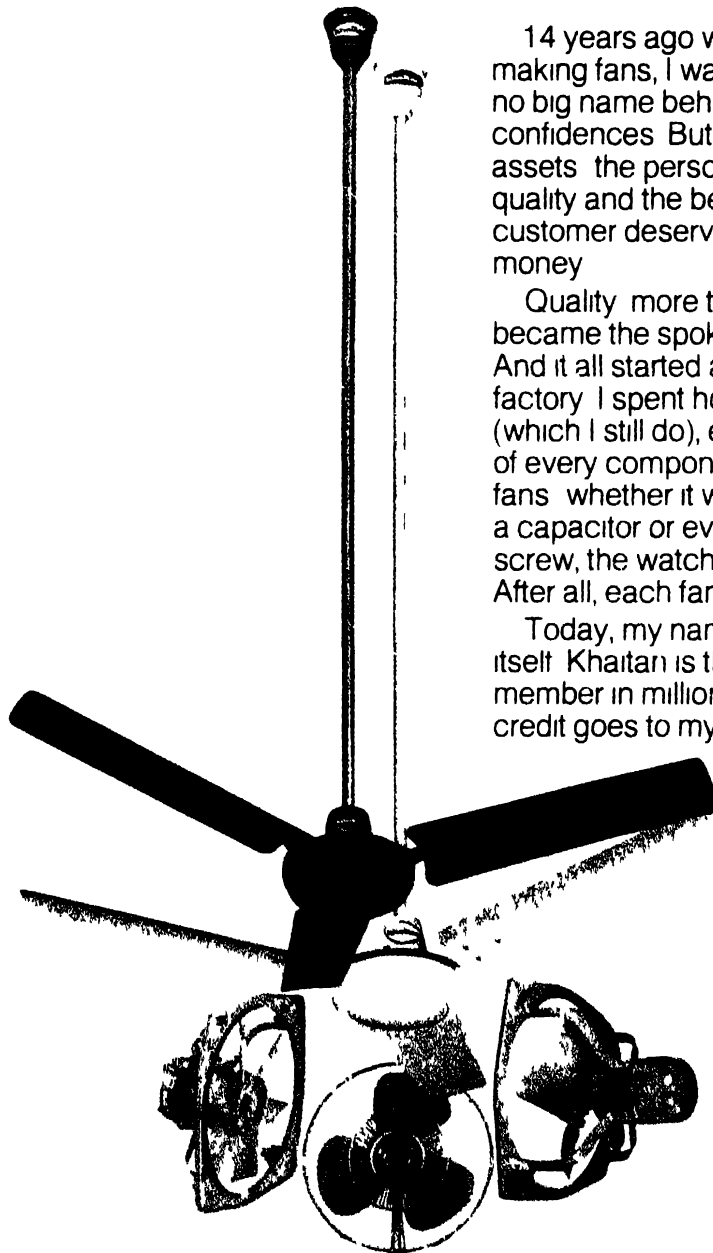
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S K Khaitan



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—The first name in fans

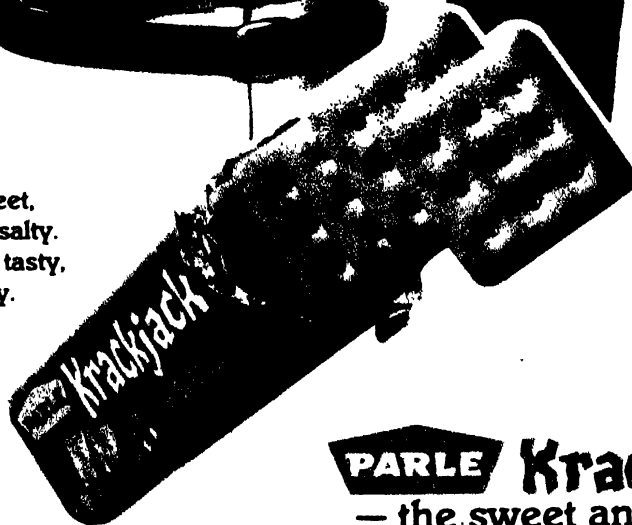
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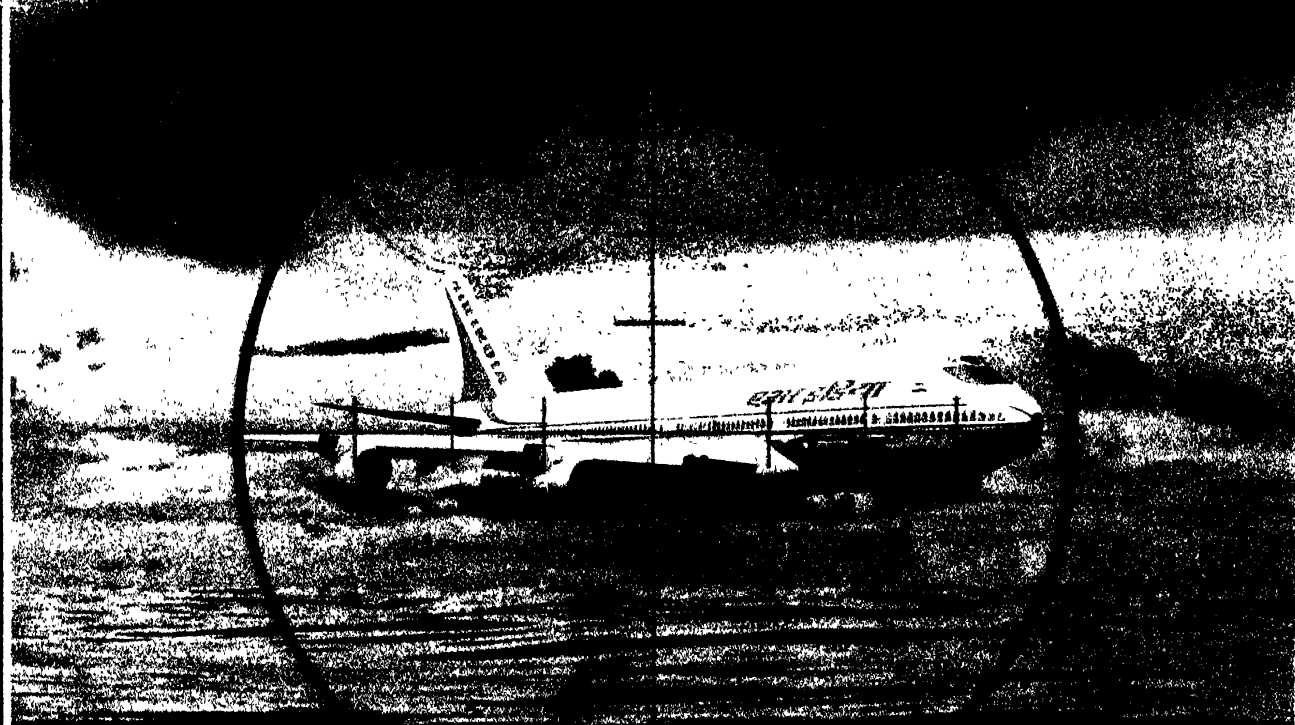
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SUNDAY



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(Indian Medical Gazette 118 223,
1984)



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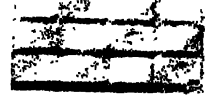
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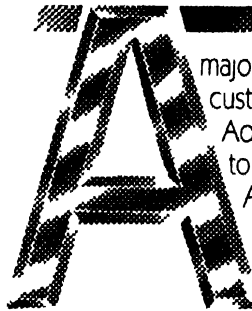
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AQUARIUS/AO/10/85

DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Cairo: It is extraordinary what the human being will do once he decides to challenge death. The pyramid is certainly the ultimate gesture of heroism, of the resolve to challenge and defeat the unknown. Five thousand years ago the Egyptian refused to take a void for an answer to both the simplest and most complex question of all: why are we born and what happens when we die? Five thousand years later we have not come any closer to finding an answer; perhaps the answer is that we will never know until we die. But of course such an answer is a defeat, a taunt to the pride of man with his pretence of knowledge and superiority over other living things. What is the extent of your knowledge if you do not even know why you are alive? There, in the shadows of the large hall of a museum, confined to an oblong glass case, wrapped in stained bandages, lies Ramses the Second, after thousands of years still trying to cheat death. The high cheekbones and the narrow, arched eyes are discernible, and suddenly it occurs to you that a genetic streak has held firm from Ramses the Second to Anwar Sadat: this is the similarity of essential features which defines a tribe. Thirty-two ingredients went into the secret potion with which the body of kings was embalmed, and fourteen of them are still unknown to modern man despite all his scientific marvels. Around the peeling Ramses

lie the highest achievements of great civilisations: towering figures in stone which dazzle the mind or intricate and exquisite detail in a medley of patterns that hold and fill the eye. The treasures of Tutankhamen are as brilliant as anything created since; and through the imagination of the anonymous artist we see the fears, loves, ambitions, dreams and injustices of an age that no history book could ever manage to convey.

The body of Ramses the Second, a great monarch who ruled for half a century flawed only by his great love for himself, lay in the crowded heart of a great pyramid, serene in the mirror world created to sustain death, until the twentieth century, consumed by the notion that only seeing is believing, began dis-embowelling graves. Could this monument to death only have been created by a man who loved himself on a heroic scale? If the Taj Mahal is a superb tribute to romance, is the pyramid the finest achievement of human vanity? A nation's wealth was consumed, and the lives of thousands destroyed to build over long generations a palace of death for one man. If the idea were not so magnificently preposterous so that it touched the heights of art, it would have been barbarous. The sheer scale of it is a wonder, only the endlessness of a desert could possibly serve as a background. It is the vast sweep of the surrounding desert which in fact cre-

ates the illusion of the pyramid being smaller than it actually is; only when you near it do you realise that a single block of stone is taller than you. The most famous of them all, the great pyramid of Cheops consists of 2,300,000 such blocks of finely cut limestone, each weighing at least two and a half tons and some as heavy as thirty tons. Consider too that these blocks were floated 700 miles down the Nile to reach their destination—it took twenty years to build the pyramid and ten years to construct the ramp. We are talking here of architecture which can ruin an empire's economy so that a king may laugh at death. But you can't of course. All the research and wisdom of the scientists of ancient Egypt was invested in the technique of embalming, and what did it achieve beyond the sustenance of flesh, bone and the myth that there was life of a material kind after the heart stopped beating? There lies, in the cold shadow of a museum, the end result of generations of effort: the shrivelled corpse, aged 4,500. But of course it was worth it. How would there ever be progress if man's ambition did not constantly step beyond what seemed possible?

Continuity and communication with the future broke down, and the achievements of the ancient Egyptian civilisation became the prey of time and thieves. Only a little of their learning seeped through, while vandals looted their tombs for the treasure that the Egyptian nobility surrounded their corpses with. It was only early in this century that the treasures of King Tutankhamen were found, strewn untidily in a dark room, protected not only by the world's ignorance of its whereabouts but also by the superstition that whoever discovered this fabulous treasure would be cursed to die a quick death. In 1922 Dr Howard Carter discovered the treasure—and died soon after. If life was indeed imitating Hollywood, and this was really *The Curse of the Mummy* at work, then the good Dr Carter deserves an extra cheer for giving his life for the greater knowledge of man. But as each bracelet or polished cat is unveiled, it tells of an age when the arts and sciences had reached a fabulous zenith.

The question that will not go away is: how did such a glorious society lose itself? Archaeology can help unveil the greatness; it does less to tell us about the decline and fall. And there are more lessons to be learnt in the latter than the former.



A pyramid near Cairo

If the Taj Mahal is a superb tribute to romance, is the pyramid the first achievement of human vanity? A nation's wealth was consumed and the lives of thousands destroyed to build over long generations a palace of death for one man. If the idea were not so magnificently preposterous so that it touched the heights of art, it would have been barbarous

“

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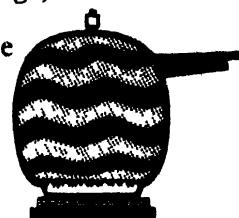
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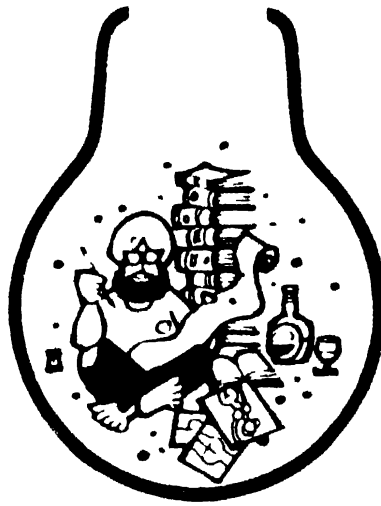
Only New Prestige is 100% safe. Only New Prestige has the GRS.

Rediscovering Tagore

People who do not read Bengali have to be forgiven for not sharing their Bengali brethren's enthusiasm for Guru Dev Tagore. I now understand why Bengalis are so touchy about the slightest criticism of Gurudev's writings. Translations of his works have never brought out his real worth. His own translations of his works are only a shade better than those done by his admirers. At long last we have a translator who has succeeded better than anyone else and brought out Tagore as he well deserved to be brought out as one of the greatest of the great poets of all times. I refer to William Radice's *Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Poems* published early this year by Penguin.

Radice got a distinction in the diploma in Bengali from the London School of Oriental and African Studies and is currently teaching Bengali in Oxford University. He is an up and coming poet of the English language. It needs a poet to translate another poet. Tagore has found his English mouthpiece 44 years after his death.

Tagore was very fussy about people translating his works. The first Englishman to try his hand was the novelist missionary, Edward Thompson. Everyone lauded Thompson's translations except Tagore. In a letter written in April 1927 to Sir William Rothenstein, Tagore complained bitterly against Thompson's endeavour which he denigrated as "absurd" and his knowledge of Bengali "very imperfect." Thereafter no one dared to touch his works till Tagore himself translated *Gitanjali* in 1912 and a year later was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. His other translations were done after he was 50 years old and, according to Radice, "physically and emotionally exhausted." Of the many translators, Radice recommends only Sheila Chatterji's *Syamali* (published by Viswa Bharati in 1955), the rest he dismisses as of lower quality than Tagore's own. I am inclined to agree with this blanket judgment because all his novels, including the celebrated *Gora*, his short stories, plays and essays read pretty flat. Perhaps it is time the entire corpus of Tagore's works which apparently run into 26 large volumes, covering almost every literary genre, a good portion yet untranslated, is translated.



That poetry is untranslatable is beyond cavil. Tagore's poetry becomes doubly untranslatable because most of it is in the form of songs where the musical component in the lyric is preponderant. What came as a surprise to me was to discover for the first time the number of ballads that Tagore composed on specific themes from Indian mythology. Of the almost 50 selected by Radice, I had come across only one in other translations. It is for the literati who know Tagore in the original to judge whether Radice has been as faithful to it. I will confine my verdict to the English rendering. I think it deserves an alpha plus. Let me illustrate my judgment with a few examples. The first is the poem entitled *Unending Love*.



A self-portrait by Rabindranath Tagore

I seem to have loved you in
numberless forms, numberless
times
In life after life, in age after age
forever

My spell bound heart has made
and remade the necklace of songs
That you take as a gift, wear
round your neck in your many
forms
In life after life, in age after age
forever

Whenever I hear old chronicles of
love its age old pain
Its ancient tale of being apart or
together
As I stare on and on into the past,
in the end you emerge,
Clad in the light of a polar star
piercing the darkness of time
You become an image of what is
remembered forever

You and I have floated here on
the stream that brings from the
fount
At the heart of time love of one
for another
We have played alongside mil-
lions of lovers shared in the same
Shy sweetness of meeting the
same distressful tears of
farewell
Old love but in shapes that renew
and renew forever

Today it is heaped at your feet, it
has found its end in you
The love of all man's days both
past and forever
Universal joy universal sorrow,
universal life
The memories of all loves merging
with this one love of ours—
And the songs of every poet past
and forever

Reading the poem I forget that this
was not an original composition in
English but a translation from the
Bengali

Tagore's descriptions of nature,
particularly of the countryside at
dusk and the onslaught of the mon-
soon is very reminiscent of Kalidasa.
In a poem *The Meghduta* dedicated
to the Sanskrit bard, he vividly de-
scribes the turbulence of a cloud
burst.

Today is a dark day, the rain is
incessant
The wind ferocious—tree tops rise
Like aims at its attack, their
swishing is a cry
Lightning darts through the
clouds, ripping them,
Dotting the sky with sharp,
crooked smiles

The Gurudev's love for his native Bengal is beautifully portrayed in *A Half acre of land*

I bow I bow to my beautiful motherland Bengal!
To your river banks to your winds that cool and console
Your plains, whose dust the sky bends down to kiss,
Your shrouded villages, that are nests of shade and peace,
Your leafy mango woods, where the herd boys play,
Your deep ponds, loving and cool as the midnight sky
Your sweet hearted women returning home with water
I tremble in my soul and weep when I call you Mother
Two days later at noon I entered my native village
The pottery to the right to the left the festival carriage
Past temple, market place granary on I came
Till thirsty and tired, at last I arrived at my home

In *Death Wedding* he looks to wards his final dissolution as it awaits a bridegroom

Why must you always come like a thief Death
Death, always silently at night's end
Leaving only tears? Come to me festively
Make the whole night ring with your triumph blow
Your victory conch dress me in blood red robes,
Grasp me by the hand and sweep me away!
Pay no heed to what others may think Death
Death for I shall of my own free will
Resort to you if you but take me gloriously

How reminiscent are the following lines of Goethe in *Faust*?

O change me, touch me with youth alchemize me! Let fiery melody
Blaze and twirl in my breast, life fire leap into ecstasy!
Let night's ribs crack let skies, As they fill with dawning enlightenment raise
Terror in remotest dark from today
I shall fight to seize and carry aloft your conch of victory

Another poem, *Gift*, again reads as if it had been composed in English
O my love, what gift of mine shall I give you this dawn?
A morning song?
But morning does not last long—

The heat of the sun
Wilts it like a flower
And songs that tire
Are done

In his poem *Larth*, Tagore writes of the contending forces of evil and good to which he adds his own "few fistfuls to that name absorbing, shape absorbing, fame absorbing Silent pile of dust"

Earth clamped into rock or flitting into the clouds,
Rapt in meditation in the silence of a ring of mountains
Or noisy with the roar of sleepless sea waves,
You are beauty and abundance, terror and famine
On the one hand, acres of crops, bent with ripeness,
Brushed free of dew each morning by delicate sunbeams
With sunset too sending through their rippling greenness
Joy, joy
On the other in your dry, barren sickly deserts

The dance of ghosts amid strewn animal bones

These examples should convince non Bengalis of the states of Tagore in the world of letters. Oh William Radice why were you not born when Tagore was living!

Bulmina

You will not find the word in any dictionary. It is felicitous coinage for a fat, cuddly girl combining 'bulge' with the feminine sounding 'mina'. Since there is no masculine counterpart for a fat boy, I propose writing to the editors of the Greater Oxford Dictionary, to consider 'Bulbola'. It sounds more appropriate than 'Bulmana'. Both names are nicer sounding than 'Bessy' or 'Billy Bunting' which are English school terminology for their fatties

I don't object to fat boys or girls as most of them shed their puppy flesh as they grow into adolescence. Nor am I put off by fleshy females in their teens or early thirties. On the contrary, some, like Devyani Chaudhary and Tarakeshwari Sinha were at the age strikingly attractive as they are today. It is the middle age spread, the enormous paunches that many men lug around and the over sized derrieres that women develop after their menopause that I find revolting. Big paunches and big bottoms are slothful. Sloth is a deadly sin.

I run into a lot of gross people every other afternoon when I go to my Health Club. You may not lose

much weight by sweating it out in a steam bath or a sauna but they do make you weight conscious and look conscious. Thereafter, if necessary, you begin to take more vigorous exercise in the gymnasium, spend more time on yoga *asanas* and count your intake of calories. I am glad to see that there is a proliferation of health clubs in all our cities. My only regret is that quite a few of them are money making rackets and charge exorbitant fees by guaranteeing their customers massive reduction of girth and weight within a few weeks. Body care is serious business and too dangerous to be left in the hands of cheap quacks and charlatans.

Those suffering from weight problem (it is the father of many diseases) are advised to read sensible books on the subject. The latest addition to the corpus of literature on obesity is written by Belinda Charlton, *Big is Invisible*. Belinda rid herself of excessive fat within the period she had prescribed for herself. I have not yet read her book but excerpts appearing in a review by P.S. Catling have induced me to place an order for it. "Women who want to make the most of themselves believe that they must make the least of themselves," writes Catling. Hence not only have books on slimming become big business but slimming is regarded as a medical exercise and an art form, the art of autosculpture, an arduous aesthetic discipline which can release ideal bodies from the unseemly blubber in which shy women sometimes hide.

It is ironic that Belinda's husband is an over sized 6 feet 3 inches author of books on good eating. One of his most quotable aphorisms is "enough is not as good as a feast, a feast is much better." Taking the cue from her husband's remarks Belinda feasted herself till, by the time she was 35 she weighed 184 kilos. The once pretty Belinda became a big blob of flesh and began to hate herself because passersby in the streets noticed nothing about her except her fatness. Then she decided to take herself in hand. She started jogging. While she was at it, her husband cunningly had it announced in the papers that his wife intended to compete in the 26-mile London Marathon and arranged to have his wife's pictures, shedding weight regularly published in the local paper. This kept Belinda going. She completed the 26-mile race not carrying 184 kilos of weight but exactly half (92 kilos) and with a bosom down from a flabby 50 to a taut 36. A kind of middle-aged Bulmina.



The Religion of Unity

I was angered by the report that a reference was made to my column in this journal in Pakistan's National Assembly. The column in question had discussed the loss of life and property suffered by the Muslims in Ahmedabad. A Pakistani minister of state, Zaim Noorani, had referred to it while expressing the hope that the Indian government would take "appropriate and effective measures" to safeguard the rights of the minorities including Indian Muslims in Gujarat and elsewhere. Noorani was speaking on an adjournment motion which Mohammad Zaman, a National Assembly member, moved but did not press. Zaman alleged that for long the Muslims of India had been the victims of atrocities and violence on various occasions.

The Pakistan government goes over this exercise of expressing "concern" over the "plight" of Indian Muslims every now and then. Last year Gen Zia-ul Haq expressed similar "concern" in a letter to Mrs Gandhi; the reply that he got from her was so sharp that he has not repeated it since then. The other day a retired Pakistani diplomat visiting New Delhi took great pride in pointing out that Pakistan was not talking about Indian Muslims any longer.

I think Pakistan is doing a great disservice to Indian Muslims by trying to pose as their champions. The Muslims of India number about 100 million, which is more than Pakistan's population, and they enjoy equal status with all other citizens under the constitution. I am not suggesting that they are beyond the reach of Hindu communalism but there is enough enlightened opinion in our country to condemn communal forces when the Muslims or members of any other minority community suffer at the hands of the majority.

At one point of time in the subcontinent's history, there was no Hindu-Muslim rioting and the Muslim League spoke initially the same language as the Congress. The phrase used then was "Hindu friends." The communal electorate introduced in 1919 made a division between the two communities inevitable. I have often been asked in Pakistan about Hindu-Muslim riots. My reply has been: "Yes, we have not been able to stop them." The two communities, as various inquiry commissions have brought out, are still exploited by political parties for votes and appeals are made to religious sentiments, resulting in even greater mistrust between the two communities.

Ours is not a perfect society but we are trying to establish a secular state where the state does not get mixed up in religion, as it is in Pakistan. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was himself unhappy to see politics "intertwined with religion"

during the Khilafat Movement (1920) which aimed at forcing the British to maintain the authority of the Caliphate in Turkey.

I admit we have not been able to eliminate communal rioting and the repercussions of the divide-and-rule policy of the British. The belief that a religious community can consider itself a separate nation is still with a lot of us. Pakistan has no right to talk of human rights when it has not accepted the modern concept of nationhood which does not differentiate between man and man on the basis of religion. A theocratic set-up cannot appreciate the difficulties of a poor, pluralistic society in remaining secular and democratic.

Fortunately, most Indians are tolerant. Not long ago, Syed Hasan, a former judge and president of the Lahore Bar Association, was in Delhi after visiting Mathura and Varanasi. He said that he was amazed at the level of communal tolerance in India and spoke of the frequent sight of temples and mosques sharing the same wall. "In our country, we would have demolished the temples long ago," he said.

It is indeed strange that Noorani should talk of human rights when the people of Pakistan live under the threat of the lash and even today hundreds of political prisoners are languishing in jail without trial.

Early this year I witnessed the election of National Assembly speaker and wrongly thought that martial law would end within six months. But now I do not think the military, which has entrenched itself and is keen to perpetuate its rule, will quit that easily or on its own. The National Assembly will continue to enjoy a semblance of power—but never real power.

Sometimes I wonder if it is the troubled conscience of the rulers of Pakistan that causes them to express "sympathy" for Indian Muslims. My feeling is that the Muslims have been the worst victims of the partition. They are now spread over three countries: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Imagine the strength of the vote they would have commanded in the undivided subcontinent; together they would have formed more than one-third of the total population of the subcontinent and in a democratic set-up they would have been a crucial factor in national politics.

I wish India rids itself of communalism and all communities work together for its secular ideal. I am sure if we eliminated the difference between one religion and another, we would see the Pakistanis themselves demolishing the high walls of suspicion they have erected. I am waiting for the day when Indians and Pakistanis would be true friends and true neighbours.

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OPINION

Troubled India

Romesh Thapar's analysis of the turmoil sweeping the country in *A Summer of Discontent* (16-22 June) was thought provoking. Though we have made rapid progress on the agricultural and industrial fronts, frequent riots and agitations often undermine such progress. Punjab was a prosperous state a few years back but today its economy is in a shambles due to the prolonged agitation there. The same holds good for Gujarat. The government has been dragging its feet as far as the Punjab and Assam problems are concerned. Unless these burning issues are given priority and a solution is found, all progress will come to naught.

Nirmaljeet Singh Walia, Calcutta

- I subscribe to Romesh Thapar's view that agitations lead to some measure of correction but to rely on

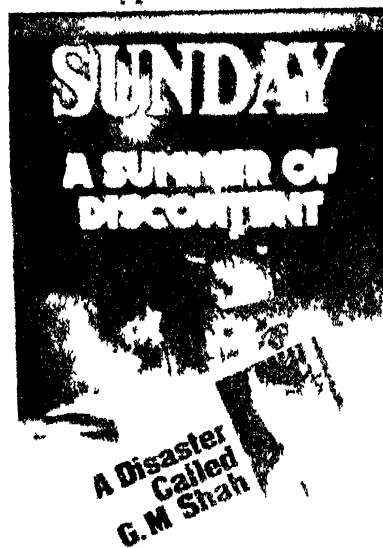
the threat of pressure and motivation is extremely dangerous. Today we are in the midst of a crisis. Our leaders have become selfish and the people of our country are disarranged. But the leaders cannot be blamed for all the evils plaguing our society; we should also share a part of the blame. We are conscious of our rights but conveniently ignorant of our duties. *Shyamli Gupta, Burdwan*

- Romesh Thapar's comments on the current situation prevailing in the country are judicious and bold. The deterrence solution tactics of the late Prime Minister are still being followed. If the Assam talks have not borne any fruit in three years, it is hardly likely that the talks on Punjab will yield any result. *Hervant Singh, Chandigarh*

- The cover story while pinpointing the reasons behind the turmoil within the country was rather disturbing for the future of the country as gloomy as has been portrayed by your magazine. *Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut*

- Romesh Thapar, K.F. Rumi and Kuldip Nayyar have done a magnificent job of reviewing the current state of affairs in the country. It is unfortunate that the people and the government remain alienated from the basic realities of the situation. However, the media is playing its role in the right perspective. *B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur*

- Sankarshan Thakur's report (*Haryana: State of Tension*), was biased. He has completely ignored the several cases where Hindus have



saved the lives of Sikhs
Y.P. Kalra, Faridabad

Tolerant Koran

I appreciated Sunday's promptness in seeking to dispel doubts from the minds of non-Muslims regarding the Koran's attitude to them (*The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims*, 9-15 June). Rafiq Zakaria successfully countered the arguments of the petitioners who sought a ban on the holy book on the ground that it inspires religious animosity. The Koran when correctly interpreted is tolerant to people of all faiths.

S. Hussain, Dibrugarh

- I agree with Dr Zakaria that the attitude of the Koran towards followers of other faiths is one of respect. The person who sought a ban on the holy book were only interested in disturbing communal harmony and the courts rightly foiled such a despicable move. *S. Ijaz Ahmad, Bhopal*

- Dr Zakaria has cleverly manipulated verse from the Surahs and the Aya's to substantiate his argument that the Koran does not preach hostility towards followers of other faiths. The author himself admits that the Koran is full of two types of people, the kafir and the mushriks, and goes on to add that all through the holy book the emphasis is on the fight between believers and non-believer. But the author was not very clear on who constituted the non-believers. *G.I. Kerkil, Pune*

- In order to prove that the Koran does not preach hostility towards followers of other faiths, Dr Zakaria

has cleverly taken out verses from the holy book. However, the author admits that the Koran is hostile to non-believers or atheists. But Dr Zakaria is vague about who the non-believers are.

D.D. Agarwal, Calcutta

Assam Dilemma

The news report on Assam, *No Early Polls* (2-8 June) was informative. It is difficult to understand why the centre is hesitating to dissolve the Assam Assembly and order fresh elections. Hiteswar Saikia came to power in 1983 through a bloody election in which very few people took part. Home minister S.B. Chavan's suggestion that 1967 be taken as the cut off year should be accepted by the Assam government and the AASU. Mr Saikia's feeling that the Congress(I) would lose the support of the minority community if the centre opted for 1967 as the cut off year only proves that the present government is a minority government.

S.C. Mallick, Aizawl

- It appeared from Santanu Ghosh's report that the centre as well as the student leaders are willing to accept 1967 as the cut off year but the present Assam ministry is trying to foil attempts at solving the Assam problem. The reason of course is that Mr Saikia who was voted to power on a minority vote thinks that the Congress(I) will lose the support of the minority if 1967 is taken as the cut off year. One man's personal ambition is coming in the way of solving a national problem. *B.R. Nanda, Lucknow*

Efficient FBI

Sharon Butler's special report *Target Rajiv Gandhi* (26 May-1 June) gave a clear picture of the terrorists' attempt to create havoc once again this time in the USA. Not only was the Prime Minister's life in jeopardy but the lives of many important personalities could have been endangered had it not been for the FBI. It was evident that a group of people in India as well as abroad want to destabilise the country. *Sanjay Chopra, Ludhiana*

- The busting of the plot to assassinate the PM by the FBI will discourage other terrorist groups from coming up with such schemes in future. It is indeed sad that some Sikhs are resorting to terrorism instead of better utilising their talents. *Probin Chandra Arambam, Imphal*

The Video Invasion

While agreeing with Lekha Dhar that the Hindi film industry is dying a slow and painful death, I do not think that video and television are to be held guilty for this (*Is Video Killing Cinema*, 9/15 June). The producers and directors whose sole concern is profit and who ignore the preferences of the cine goers should share a part of the blame
Subrato Nandi, Dhanbad

- Is video rooting out cinema from the daily life of the common man? The standard of the movies currently being produced in India is deteriorating. Films today are less creative and aesthetic. It is therefore little wonder that video is threatening the existence of the film industry. But the success of films like *Ardh Satya* and *Pvar Jhukta Nahin* proves that good cinema will always be a crowd puller.
K Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

- The cover story should make the government ponder over the adverse

effects of video. The film industry plays an important part in the cultural life of a country and its death will also signify the death of everything good of a nation. However, I did not appreciate a number of photographs published along with the article. It was a typical sales gimmick.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan

- The condition of the theatre halls throughout the country discourages people from seeing movies. The government should keep a strict vigil over the atmosphere prevailing in and around movie halls.
V N Narayanaswamy, Madras

- The Anti-video Piracy Organisation has been formed to check video piracy. But what about the piracy of music cassettes?
Arta Mishra, Cuttack

- In an otherwise informative article, I was surprised to see the provocative pictures.
S K Talapatra, Guwahati

Vision of Nehru

In *Nehru: Just a Memory* (26 May—1 June) by K P Unnikrishnan made interesting reading. It is a tragic irony that the ideals of democracy that he so cherished were forgotten during the leadership of his daughter, Indira Gandhi. Nehru believed that dissent was an essential part of democracy but Mrs Gandhi nipped all opposition to her policies in the bud. Mr Unnikrishnan had rightly pointed out that Nehru's vision of Indian democracy included socialistic policies. Unfortunately India abandoned democracy and socialism under Mrs Gandhi when she chose to impose the Emergency to remain in power. However, with Rajiv Gandhi

there seems to be a welcome change in policies once again. Respecting the views of the opposition within the party is bound to strengthen democracy.
BI Umesh Rao, Bombay

- The article *The Post Nehru Generation* (26 May—1 June) exposed the inadequacies of our education system. It is shameful that the younger generation knows so little about Nehru. It is high time the education ministry took notice of the state of affairs and made efforts to publish books on the lives of national leaders like Nehru, Gandhiji, Subhash Chandra Bose and others.
K Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

Missing Murderer

In *A Missing Assassin* (26 May—1 June), Ritu Sarin logically analysed the various factors involved in the assassination of Indira Gandhi. It is however not clear why the people responsible for the investigation are finding it so difficult to pinpoint responsibility. Is there something which the government does not wish to disclose to the public?
V Sagar, New Delhi

- The fact that the third assassin is still at large speaks of the efficiency of our intelligence services.
Rajesh Gupta, Ahmedabad

Actor Politicians

Missing Stars (*Delhi Diary*, 26 May—1 June) was amusing. Whenever an actor is cast on the screen, he is assisted by a team of experts that is the story writer, dialogue writer, song writer, the make up man and music director. But in politics one has to assist a team of workers and guide them. An actor has to exploit the sentiments of the people under the direction of experts while in politics he has to control the sentiments of the people through a team of dedicated workers.
Manmohan Singh Viridi, Muscat

Avoid Alcohol

As pointed out by Anita Pratap in *Fighting the Evil Spirit* (2-8 June), alcoholism is a disease and like any other disease it can be cured. I wish to thank *SUNDAY* for publicising Alcoholics Anonymous, the organisation which helps people to give up drinking. A one who came in contact with Alcoholics Anonymous, I wish to narrate my experience.

Back in the mid 1970s when I used to live in Calcutta, I started drinking and gradually became an alcoholic. Within five years I lost my job, home and friends. For the next ten years I went around different cities. I did get odd jobs but my thirst for alcohol landed me in the gutter. That was till I came in contact with Alcoholics Anonymous in Madras and within a very short time I gave up drinking.
K Ramakrishnan, Madras

Exploited Santhals

Santhals in *Terror* was shocking. To say the least (5/11 May) I was disturbed to read that the santhals had been shot dead by the police following a minor incident. Following an altercation between the local *mahajan* Motiram Bhagat and the adivasis, the police opened fire. The police as usual sided with the *mahajan*. Even now the santhals of the region are living in fear.
Uday Nath Mandi, Pasna (Orissa)

Unfair Analysis

I was surprised to go through Kuldeep Navar's provocative piece *Muslims Suffered Most* (Exclusive, 26 May—1 June). It was unfair to single out the Muslims as being victims of the anti reservation stir in Ahmedabad. While it is true that some of the victims of the violence were Muslims it would be wrong to say that the attacks were directed against a particular community.
P P Bectan, Hatis al Ba'in (Saudi Arabia)

Harmful Habit

Problem Drugs (*Science*, 14/20 April) was interesting and informative. The article will help people, especially the elderly, to curb the habit of taking self prescribed drugs. Indians have the habit of taking drugs indiscriminately. This has an adverse effect on the health.
A Sengupta, Bombay

COVER STORY

SUDDEN DEATH

Death came swift and sudden 31,000 feet above the Atlantic. At 8 13 in the morning of 23 June, 180 km off the coast of Ireland, a bomb shattered Air India's flight 182 travelling from Montreal to London, bringing to an abrupt end the lives of 329 unsuspecting passengers and crew. While most of the bodies of the crash victims are yet to be recovered from the waters of the Atlantic, an international search is on for two Sikh extremists, Lal Singh and Ammand Singh, who are believed to have carried out this cruel act. SUNDAY investigates into the callous terrorism which destroyed flight 182.



One of the bodies recovered from the sea being carried from the chopper at Cork airport

COVER STORY

This is the season when the otherwise sleepy little town of Cork, in the southern coast of the Republic of Ireland, comes to life. Americans of Irish descent and Europeans swoop down on this tourist spot as part of the now popular exercise of digging into one's roots. It is as much a trip to savour this romantic sea resort as to shed a few nostalgic tears about one's heritage.

But this admixture of delight and despondency has now been overtaken by a more distressing emotion: the agony of the next of kin of the victims of Air India's disaster—the mid-air explosion and crash of its Boeing 747, *Kanishka*, into the Atlantic Ocean, 180 miles off Irish shores on Sunday, 23 June. These relatives have, in fact, been flown out by the airline from various corners of the globe in an effort to identify some 140 dead bodies rescued by the Irish and British armed forces. World attention is now focussed on Cork for another important reason: it is from here that investigations are being carried out by the Indian technical team in an attempt to answer to the question: what happened to the jumbo jet?

There is no doubt that it will take a few months for the team to complete its fact-finding mission. Each and every corpse and particle of the wreckage can provide clues to the disaster. But a crucial element in determining the final moments of the national carrier's flight 182 from Toronto to Bombay, via Montreal, London and Delhi, is the detection of the "black box" (a bright orange, square-shaped equipment), the flight data recorder which has been sending out electronic signals from 6,000 feet under water and could well have been recovered by the time this appears in print.

Meanwhile, the technical team has some substantial evidence at hand. The situation is, obviously, such that if it can be established beyond a shadow of doubt that a terrorist had indeed been responsible for the explosion, then the inquest will widen into a full-scale criminal investigation. Of course, the authorities concerned in Canada, the United States, Japan, Ireland, the United Kingdom and India are already proceeding on the presumption that it was a case of sabotage. A massive man-hunt is now in progress for two American Sikhs, previously wanted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for plotting to kill Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. And now they are suspected of slipping a time-bomb into the Air India jet.

On the Saturday night of its weekly

service, flight 182's departure was delayed by an hour-and-a-half at Toronto airport because of, among other reasons, dissatisfaction with the contents of some of the luggage. Indeed, sniffer dogs went berserk at this air terminal when the baggage was being loaded on to the aircraft, prompting the security officers to unload three suitcases which were later found to be harmless. A few hours later, the flight was, however, allowed to take off. There is certainly a big question mark as to whether it ought to have been permitted to go ahead since there are firm pointers that the detective dogs were displeased till the very end.

Their reaction was not unjustified, for a few hours later—at 12 45 pm IST on the black Sunday—*Kanishka* blew up at a rather high altitude and nosedived into the sea. Only eight minutes earlier, the flight deck of the aircraft had informed ground control at Shannon airport, in the south west of the Irish Republic, that the aircraft was cruising at 81,000 feet, and that everything was "normal." Thereafter, the fact that something was amiss became evident when radio contact could not be revived with the plane and it also disappeared from the radar screens.

An international system which uses satellites for spotting a missing aircraft or ship (developed by the United States, Canada and France) and is slated to be formally commis-

sioned next month—known as *Sarat*—recorded the crash, though not before the awful spectre had been witnessed by a Panamanian ship in the vicinity. Describing the incident, the captain of this vessel mournfully remarked: "There was a sudden explosion, the aircraft somersaulted twice before plunging into the water."

Royal Air Force planes and helicopters were immediately pressed into service. An Irish warship joined the search for survivors. But all that was procured were dead bodies! According to the last count 131 bodies have been recovered out of a total of 329 passengers and crew who were killed. "It was a heart breaking project," said one of the captains of the British Sea King helicopters. And of course, there was the wreckage invaluable for the grim but imperative purpose of investigation.

While the frantic quest for the remnants of *Kanishka* and its inmates continued in the high seas, in London a visibly shattered Francis Da Gama, regional director of Air India in the UK and Ireland, informed journalists of the worst. Of course, the scribes present at the Heathrow Airport briefing already knew the position, as the news had been flashed on British radio and television. It was Mr Da Gama's second last day in office before being transferred to Air India's headquarters in Bombay. At the press confer-



Mrs Prakash Kaur (left), the distraught mother of co-pilot Capt H.S. Bhinder

COVER STORY

ence, he ruled out the idea of terrorist involvement in the tragedy. But then he was not very well informed about the state of matters. Indeed it would not be unfair to emphasise that Air India in London on that fateful Sunday was rather unprepared for an untoward occurrence, with little or no provisions made for affected relatives and friends.

After years of avid interest in the immigrant market Air India was finally extended a licence to operate in Canada last October initially from Montreal only and subsequently from the more attractive Toronto sector as well. Following the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the increasing aggressiveness of a section of the Canadian Sikhs, this corporation had requested the local agencies for 'additional security' for its flights. Admittedly the existing arrangements were quite up to international standards but, perhaps, not entirely in tune with Air India's prevailing pressures. Regrettably, the extra measures remained unimplemented until after the Kanishka disaster.

To be objective, though, the Canadian law enforcement bodies, spearheaded by the famous Mounties, have acted with swiftness and skill, albeit silently, to locate the two suspected extremists, Lal Singh (25), and Ammand (nee Dalbir) Singh (32), in the devastation of the Air India Boeing. These two were named by the FBI in May during Mr Gandhi's visit to the US. Both men lived in Flushing, New York and contrary to sacred Sikh conventions sported short hair and a clean shaven face. The other five in the alleged plot are now in custody.

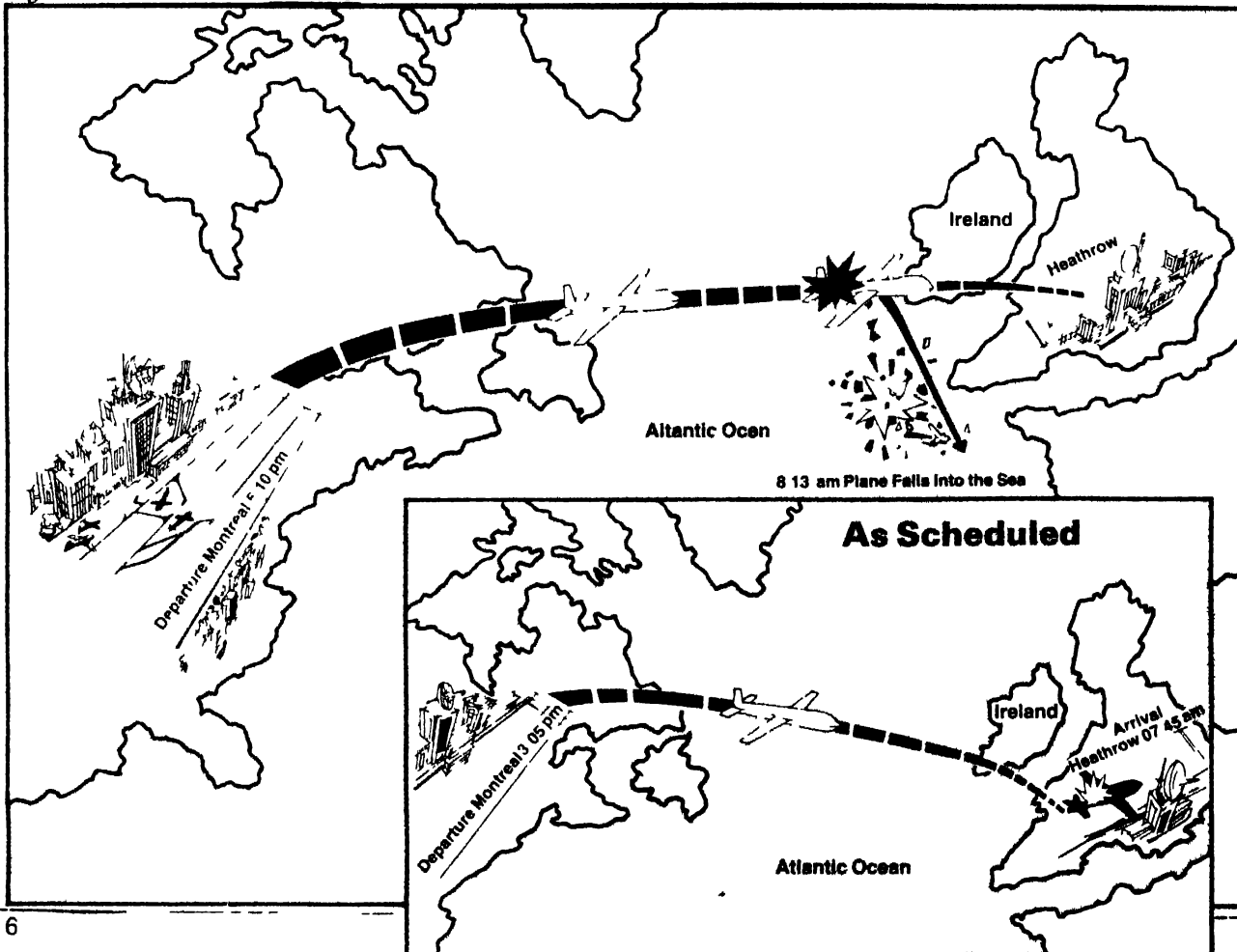
Both men it would appear, have a police record for at least a petty crime in the US. Thus, when the efficient Tokyo policemen offered a range of finger prints obtained from the suitcases in the CP Air 747 which caused the blast at Narita airport, one of them matched with those in the FBI's computer. It belonged to Lal Singh, who is suspected to have checked in this piece of luggage at Vancouver airport. This item was in fact booked for transfer on to an Air India flight headed for India. Also at Vancouver unaccompanied baggage

is believed to have been loaded on to a domestic flight to Toronto to catch the AI 182 connection to India. Was this the article that caused the explosion in Kanishka? There is conflicting opinion among the multinational investigators that this was indeed the case.

For the record, the CP air flight had L. Singh and A. Singh on its passenger list. The latter fell into the aviatorial jargon of "no show." In other words, did not turn up at all. Furthermore, there were three telephone calls claiming responsibility for the crash—all of them in the US. The *New York Times* received a call from the Sikh Students' Federation and the Dashmesh Regiment (known to be among the more sinister of the Sikh terrorist organisations), while the *Washington Post* was intimated by the Kashmir Liberation Army, some of whose loyalists were convicted for the murder of the Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre, in Birmingham, England last year. Also relevant is the fact that both Lal Singh and Ammand Singh are members of the Dashmesh Regiment.

Where have they fled? An Interpol

Map showing Kanishka's route and flight details, (inset) map illustrates how the bomb would have exploded at Heathrow airport had flight 182 left Montreal on schedule.



source conveyed to this correspondent that they could be receiving protection from Sikh activists in Vancouver, a hot-bed of Khalistan supporters. In March, Budh Singh Bhowal, travelling from Vancouver, was stopped at Heathrow and found to be carrying part of a sub-machine gun. He was sent back to Canada. On the same day, one Rajinder Singh Purewal was arrested at Vancouver airport with the missing parts of the same gun. Purewal said the gun was to be delivered to a prominent Sikh in London. Both men have been released in Canada. Lal Singh, too had attended a "mercenary training camp" in Alabama last year. According to the *Observer* he telephoned a contact man in London to insist on his innocence. He reportedly said: "I did not place a bomb on the Air India Boeing. I am innocent, the Dashmesh Regiment is innocent of any wrong doing."

Forensic examination in Tokyo has revealed that there was five to 15 pounds of plastic explosives hidden in a radio or a tape recorder and detonated by an integrated-circuit timing device. Such a bomb in the luggage hold just below the first class cabin of Kanishka, above which was the cockpit, could well have punched a hole through the aircraft's body, thus compounding the effects of decompression with those of the explosion. Another important fact is that the X-ray machine at Toronto airport had broken down when three quarters of the baggage of flight 182 had been checked. It is, of course, debatable whether the X-ray machine or its operator (a tired and distracted one at that) could have detected plastic explosives and integrated-circuits hidden in a radio. Also the hand held detector, which was then used to scan the remaining luggage, has its limitations.

However, autopsies conducted so far and initial inspection of the wreckage at Cork did not unequivocally endorse the bomb theory. The tests carried out have tried to find out:

- Whether the bodies and debris were penetrated by high velocity fragments.
- The accurate seating plan, from which the investigators may determine the exact location of the blast.
- "Gas wash"—the metallurgical parlance for charred marks on the surface of the metal parts caused by high temperature or pressure.
- "Twinning" or the deformation of the atomic structure associated with high explosives—somewhat farther from the centre of the explosion.
- Chemical evidence of explosion.

A foreign expert told SUNDAY, "If



An RAF helicopter hauls a body from the waters of the Atlantic

there had been a bomb, you would expect to have found some evidence of it in the first sampling itself." The bomb theory came very low in his list of possible causes. In fact, he linked his views to the revised assessment that the jumbo did not break up at 31,000 feet, but gradually in its fall. Besides, a check of the dead bodies has, so far, failed to decipher any burns, shrapnel wounds, or pieces of burnt seat on them. Of course, it is possible that these persons were seated in that section of the aircraft which was the least affected, and that those nearer the explosion were blown to smithereens. If it was a technical or structural complication, the crew should, plausibly, have regained control using brute force on the rudder and flaps. But a fifth engine had been strapped under the port wing, to be ferried back to India for repairs. This is a common practice; slinging the engine to the wing

saves valuable cargo space and the autopilot and flight management systems make the necessary adjustments to keep the plane stable. With the sudden loss of these systems, the flight crew could not have responded fast to avert decontrol and disaster.

But the big mystery is: Why did flight 182 disappear so suddenly from the Shannon radar screen? (This control tower has since revealed that it heard an explosion and a shriek on its radio). This is rare even in the worst air crashes, and may only be resolved by the data contained in the "black box," the recovery of which is an absolute necessity. For the 329 people who were dealt such a brutal coup de grace the curtains have been drawn, but for the rest of us, and for the government and India's premier airline, the chronicle has just begun.

Ashis Ray, London

COVER STORY

The Flight to Disaster





2



1 Bodies of the victims of the air crash recovered from the sea being brought to Cork airport, 2 Grieving relatives of the crash victims, 3 K. K. Doshi, the Indian ambassador to Ireland in consultation with a British air force officer at Cork airport

A Blueprint for Terror

Only a maniac could think of such a plan. And the people who called on Frank Camper for his help in drawing up a plan for mass murders were blinded by hate. Camper had the right credentials: he was a former CIA agent, a Vietnam war veteran and ran a school for terrorists in Alabama, USA. The Sikh terrorists who had been planning revenge for the army action in the Golden Temple, inevitably sought him out for his expert touch to their murder plans. Camper was no stranger to them: two militant Khalistanis—Lal Singh and Ammand Singh—who were later implicated in Rajiv Gandhi murder plot, had already enlisted themselves in his school.

Frank Camper admitted that the two Sikhs attended his school for two weeks last year. Camper's wife said in a newspaper interview that in the explosives segment of the 350 dollars combat survival course, the students were instructed on the elements of construction of a bomb, what the components are and how they are made. Ammand Singh and Lal Singh have been on the run ever since the plot to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi was unearthed.

It appears that Ammand Singh came to the US on a visa but Lal Singh smuggled himself into the country most probably from the

Mexican border. Neither the US immigration nor the FBI have any records of Lal Singh's entry. A sailor by profession, it is widely believed that Lal Singh spent some time in California in the company of Sikh extremists before coming in contact with Ammand Singh in New York.

What the Sikh terrorists wanted Camper to do was to draw up a blueprint for attacks on selected targets in India and abroad. The blueprint that Camper prepared for a fee of \$ 10,000, envisaged attacks on Indian offices, banks, business establishments abroad and even restaurants which were either owned or frequented by Indians. The attacks were to be widespread: from Toronto to California to New York to London. It even included plans to poison water supply installations in India.

Camper not only selected the targets he also prepared a manual for the terrorists to guide them in their attacks. He trained them in the use of explosives and high-calibre guns. And by his reckoning chemical companies owned by Indians in New York had been shipping toxic acids and chemicals regularly to India to prepare the terrorists to carry out their strike plans.

Camper's name is sufficient to send shivers down the spine. His

students had been involved in the massacre of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon's Sabra camp; they struck at black dissidents in South Africa; they killed many of President Marcos' opponent in Philippines; they were among the Contras battling in Nicaragua.

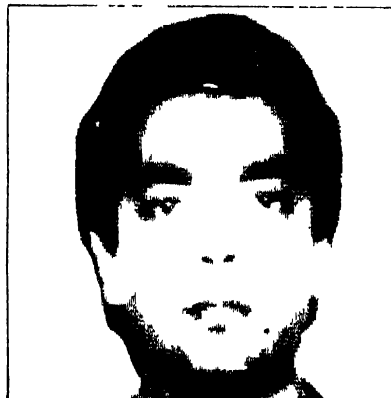
Frank Camper is not the only one in this business. According to an expert there are at least 25 such schools for mercenaries in USA offering courses in weaponry, hand-to-hand combat, ambush, rigging booby traps and even sniper techniques. These schools can be found in the backwoods of Alabama, the mountains of Colorado and the deserts of Arizona.

And how much does it cost to become a James Bond of sorts? Anything from \$ 300 for five days in North Carolina woods to a \$ 2500 two-week session in Pittsview, Alabama. Such schools are legal establishments in the United States and indeed they regularly advertise to attract pupils. "Live or die; the choice is yours," screams an advertisement. The arms used by those undergoing training in these schools are as varied as is the choice of the schools and easily available at the arms bazaar periodically held by the US arms dealers throughout the country. According to a *New York Times* correspondent almost any weapon including sophisticated missiles could be legally purchased from these bazaars.

There is enough evidence to suggest that Sikh terrorists have been purchasing considerable arms from these bazaars. With Frank Camper and the likes offering lessons in sabotage to Sikh terrorists this assumes a dangerous dimension. Even some of the US legislators are deeply worried about its possible ramifications. The senator from Alabama Jeremiah Denton, says his Senate sub-committee on terrorism is planning to investigate into the activities of such schools which have attracted international attention following the Air India Boeing crash suspected to have been caused by explosives planted by Sikh terrorists trained in one of these schools. "I believe," he says, "much more needs to be done in the area to find out what camps exist, what they are teaching and what laws apply or should apply to get control over these camps."

A Special Correspondent

Wanted



Name: Ammand Singh
Alias: Amat Nath
Date of birth: 12 March 1951
Height: 6' 1 1/2"
Weight: 160 pounds
Eyes: Brown
Hair: Black



Name: Lal Singh
Alias: Ashok Sethi
Date of birth: 25 February 1960
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 160 pounds
Eyes: Brown
Hair: Black

"It was Cold-blooded Murder"

When Air India's 45 million dollar Jumbo, *Kanishka*, tragically completed 23,600 hours of flying time in the sea off Cork, it left behind a trail of inconsolable relatives. Birthdays, betrothals and long-awaited reunions will never be. All that they can now do is to identify the remains of their near ones. "She died a martyr for her country. It was a cold-blooded murder. We have lost our precious daughter. We cannot retrieve what we have lost," Henry Lasrado, 56-year old father of Sharon, one of the air-hostesses who died in the crash, broke down as he spoke of his daughter's fate.

"She was not scheduled for the flight. She was not even on a standby. She was scheduled to go on the evening flight to London. But when she called them (the airline authorities) they said she had to report for this flight. She told them she wanted to operate the evening flight as per schedule. But an order was an order and there was no backing out," her brother's fiancée, Joan Crasto told SUNDAY. "The London flight would have brought her back on the 19th in time to celebrate her birthday on the 20th," a relative put in. Sharon Lasrado had just turned 23 when she met her fate which wiped out a birthday celebration planned on her return, her betrothal and a bright future. "You can add this," Mr Lasrado said. "We are Indians. We are prepared to lay down our lives for the country."

Christopher Rodericks spoke softly. His eyes betrayed no emotion. The only sign of the tragedy that he and his 15-month old daughter, Kriselle, would have to live with, was manifest in the slight tremor of his hand as he smoked. "There is nothing I can say at this point, nothing. Elaine did not want to go on this flight. She was tired. We returned from her three-month posting in Perth, where she had to keep shunting back and forth from the hospital as I was laid up with an appendix operation. Besides this her aunt was bed-ridden. And, of course, there was the baby. She didn't want to leave her at all, this was her first long flight in two years." But his wife Elaine, when asked to operate this flight had not said no. Her reluctance to board the doomed Montreal flight was evident only in her words: "I am feeling bad about leaving my baby."

When Upendra Kumar Bada came to Bombay it was to receive his sister's family and book five tick-



Air-hostess S.M. Lasrado

ets—four for the family and one for himself—on a flight to Bhuj in Gujarat. Instead, he saw what happened on television and rushed to the Sahar international airport, only to confirm the horror he had seen. His first reaction was one of bewilderment; the next tears. He talked incoherently pushing aside the glass of water an Air India staffer offered "What is the use of this, when everything is over? My parents were very eagerly looking forward to receiving them at Bhuj. Now they won't even get their bodies. I am trying hard to keep calm, but tell me is it possible in such a situation? he asked. "Let me cry it out." Crying is probably all they have left as was the case with the Bada brothers (Upendra was joined by his brother B.N. Bada), who took the 4.15 am AI flight to London on 27 June to identify the bodies of their relatives.

A retired marine engineer with the Shipping Corporation of India, 62-



Asst. flt. purser J.S. Dinshaw

year old Keki Dinshaw Dumasia looked dignified in his grief. He was the only person who was in total control of himself on the night of 23 June, when weeping relatives thronged Sahar airport. "He was to retire in another four months, but probably somebody up there wanted him to be active till his death," he said of his brother, 58-year old Dara P. Law Dumasia. "When I left my house I had some hopes of his survival, but when I came here they told me no one had survived."

"If the flight had been hijacked, I am sure Jamshed would have taught them a lesson. Remember the hijack with the toy pistol, where the pursers overpowered the hijacker? That was just his kind of thing. He was a tough guy," said Darryl Fernandes of his friend, assistant flight purser Jamshed Dinshaw. Unfortunately Mr J.S. Dinshaw didn't have the time to contend with anyone or anything. He went down with his wife, leaving a mother who has hardly recovered from the loss of her daughter in the 1978 air crash.

Ex-air-hostess Sarita D'Mello recalled in-flight supervisor Sampath Lazzer, a founder-member of the cabin crew association, who has over 20 years of flying experience. It was tragic for his family. Just two years back he lost a son, who died of meningitis. His wife, Sylvia, was an ex-air-hostess. She and their two-and-a-half-year-old daughter went down with him. Sanjay, the only remaining member of the family, is Sam's son by his first wife who has also remarried. He left to identify his family.

For Indru Chatlani the scar will probably never heal. He came down from Bangkok on hearing of the crash. He was depressed and ill because he lost his sister-in-law, 13-year-old niece and four-year-old nephew, but more so because he had insisted that they make this trip. Relatives of the family who blamed Air India for the lax security that overlooked possibilities of sabotage, swore that they would not travel by the airline.

With the death of 22 of its members, the Air India cabin crew association is in mourning. A member of the association said, "They were all very nice people and good friends." He described the vice-president of the association and one of the crash victims, K.N. Thakur, as the "favourite" of the crowd.

Lekha Dhar, Bombay

Was the Crash Avoidable?

Security lapses take their toll

Were 329 innocent air passengers victims of callousness? While officially the USA is in the forefront of the international movement against terrorism, its own Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has unearthed the grisly details of the commando training which anti-Indian elements have been receiving in a private "school" at Alabama. Democracy means a free society, but should this freedom allow "schools" to be run to train people in the dirty tricks of sabotage and killing? The crash of the Air India's flight 182 has thrown up the possibility that Sikh extremists trained by a Vietnam war veteran, Frank Camper, may have manufactured and planted the bomb which blew up Kanishka. Till the time of writing the "black box" of the ill-fated plane has not been recovered so the cause of the disaster can at best be surmised.

Whether the Air India jumbo jet went down into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland as a result of sabotage or there were other reasons for the death of the 329 passengers would be known in due course. But one thing is clear in the United

States of America, "schools" are being run by Vietnam war veterans who train people knowing full well that these agents of death would indulge in unlawful killings. The fact that the existence of these macabre schools is known to the American establishment and due to constraints of the American law nothing can be done to stop such "schooling," only shows that the defeat in Vietnam a decade ago has left indelible marks on American society. The Vietnam misadventure has not only cost the Americans dear, but also left side effects like the one possibly felt when flight 182 of Air India crashed in the early hours of 23 June.

While not ruling out the possibility that technical flaws may have resulted in the crash, it has to be noted that aviation experts feel that despite engine failure, the aircraft could have glided for a while and need not have crashed. The captain could have either landed in a nearby airfield or tried to make the aircraft float on water. In this case, according to the only eyewitness, the commander of a passing ship, he had seen an explosion in the rear of the plane after which the jumbo jet fell into

the sea.

It is not an easy task to blow up a Boeing 747 aircraft. Sophisticated and powerful explosives would be required to blow up a jumbo jet. It is now known that 55 minutes before the ill-fated flight disappeared from the radar screen of Shannon air traffic control, a bomb went off at Tokyo's Narita airport. The luggage which carried the explosives had been brought in from Vancouver by Canadian Pacific Airways flight 003 and was meant to be loaded into an Air India flight which was to take off from Tokyo shortly afterwards. Possibly the saboteurs had planned to blow up two Air India jumbos simultaneously to attract the world's attention to the demand for Khalistan—a demand which does not evoke much sympathy or support from the majority of Punjabis, both Hindus and Sikhs. The anti-Indian forces, which have received training in private "schools" in the USA, had a blueprint for terrorism in which Air India flights were the first targets.

The callousness of the Air India staff in Canada and the Canadian authorities cannot be forgiven. One wonders how two flights could leave Canadian airports on the same day with time bombs in their cargo holds. In the case of the Air India flight, the airline officials should have been warned after police dogs had sniffed out explosives. The entire luggage should have been inspected before the flight left. The difficulty with the Air India personnel serving abroad is that in most cases they have been posted for years together and along with vested interests, callousness has also crept into their performance.

According to a report in the *New York Post*, the two terrorists wanted by the FBI for their involvement in the plot against Rajiv Gandhi (which was busted by the FBI), Lal Singh and Ammand Singh, paid a little over US dollars 10,000 to the mercenary trainer, Frank Camper, to attend his "school" in Alabama. In the course of the training they learnt to use a range of weapons—from Israel-made M16 machine carbines to AK 47 rifles. Besides, they were taught the use and manufacture of explosives. While imparting commando training to them, Camper was aware that the two would use the knowledge ac-



One of the victims being carried to a waiting army vehicle at Cork airport

Kanishka Crash: Conflicting Views

What made Air India's flight 182 crash into the Atlantic? The general belief in Bombay, among police and airlines officials, is that only a bomb explosion could have made the aircraft disintegrate in the air and disappear from the radar screen in a matter of seconds. Deputy commissioner of police B.P. Bhan, who has been trained in explosives, said that unless it was a bomb explosion the aircraft would not have disintegrated. An instance: when Air India's Ashoka crashed in 1978 due to technical problems, the fuselage was found in one piece: in the case of Kanishka it was scattered over an area of about five sq km. According to Mr Bhan, at a height of 31,000 feet (the height at which the aircraft was travelling when the tragedy occurred) the atmospheric pressure is very low and when cabin pressure is let off (as happens in case of an explosion), the bodies explode instantaneously. That is perhaps why the captain of flight 182 had no time to send out the May Day signals. Mr Bhan felt that the bomb need not have been a very powerful one as the internal pressure in the aircraft would have helped it blow up. He said the pressure outside is always tugging at the pressure inside and even if a bullet is fired in the cabin, the hole could lead to dangerous consequences.

But Inspector R.V. Karekar, who is trained to handle and defuse bombs in the city, is not convinced that a bomb explosion caused the crash. He said that the fact that the bodies of those seated in the first class section and the cockpit were more or less intact, provides room

for doubt about a bomb causing the tragedy. He explained that when a bomb explodes and rips an aircraft, death is ghastly since the blood vessels, lungs and other parts of the body burst. Neither was there any possibility of bodies remaining less affected just because the bomb may have been placed in the baggage hold and not up front.

Even if it was a bomb, concedes Karekar, it would have to be of an intensity available only with professionals. The detonator which would cause the acceleration, ignition and finally the explosion would have to be timed. The bomb would have to be a plastic one, the kind used by military establishments and other professional explosive agencies. The quantum of explosive, of course is not very important since the air pressure inside the aircraft would ensure that the aircraft was blown to pieces.

Capt D. Bose, Air India's managing director, said while there is "no concrete evidence" to say categorically that sabotage was the cause of the crash of Kanishka, "circumstantial evidence appears to lead to the sabotage theory." Capt Bose said that the factors which led to this conclusion were:

- The suddenness of the crash; the plane was flying at 31,000 feet when it suddenly went off the radar screen. If it was any other cause, the pilot would have had sufficient time to signal his distress.
- The autopsy reports of the bodies recovered show that the passengers were exposed to decompression. All symptoms were those of being exposed to high altitude.
- The wreckage of the plane was

spread over five miles initially and this indicates it broke up in the air.

• There is no doubt that at Narita airport, Tokyo, the bomb that exploded was in the luggage that came on a Canadian airliner from Vancouver. Both the flights came via Toronto, indicating that there was some terrorist activity in Toronto. The fingerprints located on the luggage at Narita have been said to be those of a known terrorist. So if it was possible for the terrorists to have smuggled a bomb into a Canadian airliner at Toronto, the same could have happened in the case of the Air India flight.

However, Capt Bose maintained, "there is no conclusive evidence, only overwhelming circumstantial evidence. I have never heard, in my 34 years of flying, of a plane exploding in the air. The Kanishka had not even completed half its flying life

Enquiries with several experienced people in Air India led to the same sabotage theory as the most reasonable assumption for the cause of the crash. Said one of them, "Every accident has to have some previous history. For instance, the 1978 Air India accident was due to a defect in the altitude director indicator (ADI). This ADI indicates whether the aircraft wings are level. The ADI as an equipment had a history of getting stuck. On this particular flight the ADI had got stuck when the plane took off from Bombay and at low altitude turned towards Dubai. As it was very dark the pilot could not even see the horizon and he kept turning further and further left and plunged into the sea.

Olga Tella, Bombay

quired at his school to indulge in terrorism in India. Yet, such training was legally imparted within the borders of the United States of America, a country which is extremely vocal in its protests against international terrorism. While the American public waited with bated breath for the release of the Trans World Airlines (TWA) aircraft which had been hijacked and the American administration officially condemned international terrorism, "schools" such as the one run by Frank Camper thrived on the soil of the USA.

The American administration has not acted against these "schools,"

but the FBI keeps a close watch on them, says the report in the *New York Post*. To the Americans, men like Frank Camper are heroes who are training guerillas to overthrow communist regimes. The communist bug continues to nibble at the American mind and has blinded its vision. How obnoxious the activities of the Camper school are, can be judged from the statement of Mrs Camper, who told newsmen that she would not be bothered if it were revealed that Kanishka was sabotaged by terrorists trained by Camper. "To be bothered would be like working at a driver education plane and then people go out and do hit and runs. You can't

take responsibility," Mrs Camper said. According to her the school was started by her husband "because we don't like communism."

So far the Camper school has held 22 classes. Terrorist Lal Singh has been described by trainer Camper as being a "good student." One wonders how the American law permits "good students" to indulge in activities which endanger human life. The Kanishka crash should take the blindfold off the American eyes. None of the 329 passengers killed on the morning of 23 June were communists.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

A Fight for Life

By Germaine Greer



A mother and her frail child wait for relief in Ethiopia

Germaine Greer, author, journalist, explorer and high priestess of women's lib, set out for Ethiopia with the impression that millions of hungry Ethiopians were being starved by the Marxist government to shift them from pro-West, anti-government strongholds to government appointed settlements. This has been the refrain of the western media on Ethiopia which is facing its worst famine following three years of drought. These reports conveyed the impression that even those who have survived the drought and famine are facing certain death because of the Ethiopian government's callous rule. "I began with the usual prejudices," confesses Ms Greer. But having spent a month in Ethiopia (press visas are usually limited to ten days) by, what she says, "a concerted effort, involving armtwisting and ruction-creation of various kinds," and travelling to remote areas, she discovered that most of what she had read in the western press was untrue. "I had some difficulty believing my own eyes until I began to grasp how misinformed the English are, routinely disinformed rather." Instead of a vast graveyard that she was expecting Ethiopia to be, Ms Greer saw a people, though hungry and poor, fighting a remarkable battle to stay alive—and, more important, winning it despite all odds. Here is the first of her two reports for SUNDAY on a people's struggle for survival.

SPECIAL REPORT

To get to Asosa, you climb out of the steamy cauldron through which the Dabus makes its way to join the Blue Nile up to 1500 feet or so, lowlands by Ethiopian computation. Silver-leafed ground cover plants glow against the blood red earth like aquamarines. In the groins of the rolling tablelands flow fast, full streams and the wild mango trees dotting the skyline show the water table to be high. In April, the mango fruits were beginning to ripen, hanging like polished lumps of soapstone, motionless at the ends of their strings, while a cool breeze was stirring the leaves.

The first sign of the resettlement area was a vast ploughed expanse, intersected by bands of shiny elephant grass following the contours of the slopes, to prevent soil loss through water run-off. Gangs of men hacking out the scrub with hoes and machetes straightened up when our Landcruiser swept past at the head of its column of red dust and hooted a greeting. As we swung round a bend a band of Oromo girls from Welo appeared laughing and squealing, running alongside waving both hands in welcome. The shock of delight almost winded me. The last time I had seen faces like those was in the famine relief shelter in Bati in the dark days of December. In Bati there was no shine to their skin, drawn tight and yellow over the bones of their skulls. I saw girls like these buried in mass graves painfully carved out of the stony hills and their mothers bereft of friend, confidante, helper, pride and joy, were catatonic with grief. In Bati there was heart-breaking dignity; in Asosa there was teenage high spirits and an irrepressible sense of adventure.

Among the familiar brown faces, I saw some unfamiliar ones, blue-black with very pink-and-white smiles. Occasionally I glimpsed tall, almost naked women standing by *tukuls* with raised grain bins and elegant screens, all plaited like wickerwork out of the long plant canes that grow wild along the Dabus. These are the Jablawi, indigenous inhabitants of this part of Welega, only 50 kms from the Sudanese border. The Jablawi have been involved in the resettlement scheme from the beginning, usually through food-for-work programmes. As the clearing goes on for the new settlers who arrive in Asosa at the rate of about 25,000 a week, many of them unfit for work, the Jablawi are needed more than ever. The established settlers buy calves and chickens from them, and are experimenting with Jablawi construction techniques and materials, while the Jablawi are being drawn into the settlers' soccer matches and are ploughing their own land using conservation techniques they have learned from the settlements, instead of slashing and burning, exploiting the land intensively for a few years and moving on. When I asked what a small Tigrayan boy was doing with a Jablawi throwing stick, Comrade Kumilachew, secretary of the WPE (Resettlement), Asosa branch, ex-schoolteacher, said with mock pomposity: "Cultural exchange."



Famine victims wait outside a relief centre at Mekele in northern Ethiopia

Doubtless there were Jablawi who represented the arrival of hundreds of thousands of ragged starvelings with their attendant diseases, but it was in the nature of the case that I did not see them, for there are still thousands of hectares of bush for them to vanish into. What is clear is that the Ethiopian authorities proceed with unusual sensitivity, for the first step in opening up the new areas is to provide schools where the local children may be taught in their own language (the Ethiopian literacy campaign is conducted in 15 languages). In all the settlement areas that I visited I found evidence of mutually advantageous interaction between settlers and indigenous population. In the settlement areas around Gambela in Ilubabor, the guards are all Anuak, proud of their spotless militia uniforms and their cherished old rifles. Their job is to protect the settlers from attack, principally from wild animals, for lions can be heard at night and elephants have already trampled settlers' huts. As experienced hunters the Anuak take to the job with a will. All their protective instincts are called forth by the settlers, who look even frailer and more vulnerable next to these astonishingly tall, broadshouldered and straight-backed people, who by teaching them to make fish traps and how to cook the fish that teem in the Baro system may one day find the settlers growing nearly as strong and tall as they. The Anuak are astonishingly clean; an Anuak woman will go naked rather than put

In Bati there was heart-breaking dignity; in Asosa there was teenage high spirits and an irrepressible sense of adventure.



SPECIAL REPORT



Until now one of the most typical and astonishing sights in Ethiopia is a team of 50 or so oxen, moving in synchrony across the slopes, ploughing fields of five or six acres

on a soiled dress. They are the best customers for the tubewells that have been sunk in every village in the Gambela settlements, and Anuak compounds, graceful rings of *tukuls* around communal piazzas, can be found in the midst of settlement villages.

Gambela and Asosa are massive government projects. In other areas, peasants' associations have run their own resettlement projects. In Horo Gudro, the peasants' associations have absorbed 8402 families, 28,890 people in all, for whom they have built *tukuls*, and to whom they have given 800 oxen. In this case, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) has not even been asked to supply the food rations necessary until the farmers can harvest from their new land, the locals are supplying it themselves. The peasants' associations are changing the face of Ethiopia. After the sweeping land reforms which were among the first enactments of the revolutionary government, land use tended to fragment even further as each farmer was given parcels of all the kinds of land to be found in each association's 800 hectares. The impossibility of developing rational patterns of land use

and conservation under such a system soon became obvious. By "agitation" (the Ethiopian way of describing motivation and mobilisation) by cadres and agricultural extension workers, the idea of cooperative farming took hold, until now one of the most typical and astonishing sights in Ethiopia is a team of 50 or so oxen moving in synchrony across the slopes, ploughing fields of five or six acres. The results in terms of the Ethiopian landscape are spectacular. A World Bank official told me that he expects Ethiopia to solve its food problem in ten years, and has recommended that a World Bank scheme of rolling credit for the purchase of oxen be more than doubled. The Swedish International Development Authority, after an assessment tour in April, has increased its commitment from 10 to 24 million dollars. Less impartial observers concerned rather to embarrass the administration than encourage the people of Ethiopia prefer to continue investing massive sums in showy projects in countries like Brazil, where the small farmers are so threatened from development that three million peasants have died of starvation in the last five years.

Resettlement is the most condemned of all the policies of Ethiopia's embattled administration, perhaps because most of its critics know nothing whatsoever about it.



A Kenyan doctor examines a starving baby at the famine relief centre at Alamata, north of Addis Ababa.

SPECIAL REPORT

Resettlement is the most condemned of all the policies of Ethiopia's embattled administration, perhaps because most of its critics know nothing whatsoever about it. Resettlement is generally taken to be a draconian measure to reduce population pressure in drought-affected areas, to populate border areas in the interests of national security and to undermine the power base of the rebel movements in the north. Clearly all these considerations have some weight with the PMAC, but neither in terms of historical fact, nor in the priorities of the RRC officials and party workers involved in the day-to-day administration of the schemes, do they have any relevance. Ever since the disastrous famine of 1973-'74, and the localised famines that followed and continue to follow, resettlement has been carefully considered as one of the options in a strategy to abolish famine in Ethiopia. Only about a quarter of the good arable land available is actually cultivated. As the Ethiopian Mapping Institute continued its work of survey after the revolution, suitable areas for resettlement were identified and study teams sent out to assess their potential.

The first settlers arrived in the pilot project in Asosa in 1977; they were 144 "family heads," that is, unaccompanied males. We can probably safely assume that they were used as work gangs in conditions that we might consider fairly anti-social, although not more so than those commonly endured by seasonal workers such as cane-cutters and shearers, or for that matter coffee pickers. Farmers living in areas of recurrent drought were used to walking from the northern highlands to Kefa to make enough cash by coffee picking to return and keep their families at subsistence level until they could expect a harvest.

As desertification in the north increased, the number of workers arriving in coffee-growing areas began to exceed the demand, at the same time as the coffee export price was falling. The Asosa option was by no means a soft one, but the men who arrived in 1977 probably chose it. The next year, 5,844 male family heads arrived, along with 300 women, also described as family heads. At this stage, the project directors were clearly making problems for themselves, in trying to run the project like a barrack. The Ethiopian peasant household is a unit; without the labour of women in fetching water and fuel and the lengthy preparation of food, let alone in growing vegetables and raising chickens and marketing, a peasant's life is comfortless. The early settlers were restless and their commitment to the success of the project began to flag. The women and children left at home often refused to make the journey to join them. Some of the settlers began to walk away, and, contrary to popular prejudice, there was nothing the authorities could do to stop them. Of the 1800 Tigrayans settled at Anger Guten in 1979, more than 1300 walked back to Tigray where, seeing as they came from land considered exhausted in 1979 they have probably perished.



Relatives wash the body of a dead infant prior to burial in a refugee camp

In 1979, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission announced a massive scheme for the development of 84 resettlement units. The areas had been selected for topography and soil type as suitable for cultivation, as well as for potable water supply, disease control and access. Each unit was to comprise a cluster of villages of 500 families each, together with a farmed area of up to two hectares per household. For a country as poor as Ethiopia the scheme was staggeringly costly, but it went ahead, surveying, road-making, clearing, ploughing until it has now cost 87 million Birr, a formidable investment for a country at war. The settlers' houses are built for them, out of materials locally available, by students, party workers and local residents, most of them working overtime without pay. The houses are what most of Ethiopia's population lives in, *tukuls* constructed on poles driven into the ground, with earthen floors where the cooking fire stays in day and night. The smoke curls the thatch of the roof on its way out; ventilation is drawn through the straw or bamboo or mud and plaster walls. In Asosa they had incorporated some modest improvements, hanging shelves to keep clothes and food off the floor, and a raised platform for sleeping, but otherwise the *tukuls* were like most of the *tukuls* in Ethiopia, without furniture, without means

Every single thing foreign aid brings to Ethiopia is exploited to the maximum, nothing whatever is wasted. Non-biodegradable plastics are not a curse here but a treasure.





A child holding a pot sits with others in one of the relief centres in Ethiopia

In almost every aspect of the resettlement project, the problems were the same. A massive investment of work and energy from RRC workers and settlers alike was being nullified by lack of resources



of lighting without privacy. The most treasured of the settlers' belongings are, as in the rest of Ethiopia, the yellow plastic butter oil bottles which carefully threaded on sticks are carried to the stream for water each day and the soy-bean oil tins marked gift of the citizens of the United States that are used to hold butter oil bought in the local market and the Canadian wheat bags that hold anything but Canadian wheat. The RRC sells relief food containers on the open market: the butter oil bottles fetch four Birr each, the sacks and tins, two. The sacks are split to make carrier bags or stuffed with straw for palliasses. Every single thing foreign aid brings to Ethiopia is exploited to the maximum; nothing whatever is wasted. Non-biodegradable plastics are not a curse here but a treasure. The poverty of the RRC causes serious problems, but it also constitutes a protection for the settlers: cannot be seen to be favoured above the indigenous population, than which none in the world is poorer. As it is, settlers and locals struggle together for increased economic opportunity, and their circumstances improve mutually if very gradually as they sell and barter goods and services between themselves. Each *tukul* is set in 1000 sq mm of private plot and the produce of that, whether eggs, pepper, *chat*, coffee, bananas, beans, lentils, tomatoes or potatoes, is the peasants to do with as they please.

In the third year, nearly half the new

arrivals at Asosa were wives and children. By 1980, wives and children outnumbered arriving family heads. In the last eight months, when something of the order of 200,000 settlers have arrived in Asosa, two thirds of the total are accompanying family members. In fact, most complete families have more than three members, the figure still contains a proportion of men without women and children, especially among Tigrayans. There are now 17 settlement units in various stages of development, covering a total area of 20,000 hectares, including farm land, villages and parkland for grazing, in an area stretching from 14 kms east of Asosa town to 22 kms west. Altogether more than 62,000 households had been resettled in Welega province by mid April, about two thirds of them from Welo, a third from Tigray and 1500 or so from Eritrea. In all resettlement areas in Welega, Gojjam and Ilubabor, resettlement should continue at the rate of about 100,000 people a month, a total of a million and a half by the end of the year. The sudden acceleration in the pace of the actual movement of people might give the impression that the whole scheme is a hasty improvisation, when it is actually the climax of years of planning and preparation. This is not to say that the absorption of new arrivals does not present problems. The poverty of the RRC, the social and financial burden of commandeering half the country's bus services to ferry settlers, the shortage of vehicles for the transportation of the food supplies needed by the new settlers (and in fact for almost all the settlers), the diversion of hundreds of tractor operators from state farms and other enterprises to plough the firm lands in the settlement areas and train peasants to carry on, the shortage of bulldozers and other heavy machinery, the small number of drilling rigs for tubewells, all these factors have thrown the settlers and the workers, some of whom are volunteers getting experience before going to university back on their own devices.

The methods and aims which RRC officials and party workers involved in resettlement practise and profess have doubtless been influenced by the Bale experience. In 1980 severe social disruption was caused in the province by the flight of peasants from war and famine in the southern area along the border with Somalia. In this case, UNICEF was actively involved in the design and administration of a scheme of orderly resettlement. This massive operation has been accounted a complete success. The new settlers in the north of Bale are now considered self-sufficient, although the mechanisation of their agriculture is causing problems. UNICEF still gives "aid to settlers" although prevented from giving support to resettlement schemes as such, principally because if the settlements are to be run as state farms they must be considered to be essentially profit-making bodies and hence ineligible for UNICEF assistance. Oxfam is also involved in special projects involving settlers. The general feeling among those

Less impartial observers, concerned rather to embarrass the administration than encourage the people of Ethiopia, prefer to continue investing massive sums in showy projects in countries like Brazil, where the small farmers are so alienated from development that three million peasants have died of starvation in the last five years.

few NGOs with any first hand knowledge of Ethiopian resettlement is that the denial of development funding to the Ethiopian government, in particular the denial of support for resettlement as a bona fide attempt to restore the peasantry to dignity and self-sufficiency, is malicious and destructive. For some months delegates of the League of Red Cross Societies have been making representations in Geneva for permission to give more active help to drought victims who have chosen the resettlement option so far without success.

The Ethiopian government is to some extent responsible for the degree of animosity aroused by the mere mention of resettlement. Intensely aware of the havoc wrought by malicious press reporting, as in the fantastic tale of teft sales to the Soviet Union for vodka production and the mileage got out of the coincidence that a shipment of liquor for the duty free stores arrived at the same time as the first large shipments of relief grain, the WPF Central Committee decided to protect its investment in resettlement by keeping it away from foreign media. This should have been more difficult than it was, but journalists preferred to entertain lurid hypotheses rather than to pressure the authorities to open up (especially once the suspicion gained ground that spectacular scenes of peasant bashing were not to be expected). The first settlers I encountered could have been watched by any journalist who was interested for they travelled through Addis Ababa in a conspicuous convoy of 123 buses, preceded and followed by motorcycle police on showy BMWs with blue lights flashing and sirens blaring. On almost any day in Addis you will find special traffic police waiting to hold up cross town traffic to let the settler convoys pass.

For the exorbitant and illegal price of two Birr (a dollar by the official rate of exchange) a blue and white taxi took me to Alem Gena, where I watched for two hours as the 8000 people in the 123 buses on their way from Kembata in Woleita to Metekel in Gojjam were given fresh bread for their lunch, and their water supplies replenished. A doctor was on hand to give emergency aid, until they should arrive in their overnight shelter at Debre Marcos. While I was interviewing the drivers, most of whom had been driving settlers solidly for the last three months, an old cowherd came quietly up and stood sniffing the scent of the new baked bread. He asked if he might help distribute it in return for a loaf for himself. Gravely, the drivers' assistants listened to his request, they could have worked faster with



A starving child outside a relief camp in Addis Ababa



Ethiopian famine victims receive relief grain from the United States

Journalists preferred to entertain lurid hypotheses rather than to pressure the authorities to open up, especially once the suspicion gained ground that spectacular scenes of peasant bashing were not to be expected.

out him, but they let him take the corner of a sack of loaves and run with them down the interminable line of buses. Twice he dashed up and down with them, skinny legs pumping, rags flapping. Then with dignity he accepted two loaves and walked back up the hill to earn his nickel a day per beast for minding other people's cows.

The convoy was one of the most stirring sights I have ever seen. When I tried to describe it to a TV journalist he interrupted: "Did you see the Kalashnikovs?" One of the reasons I went to Alem Gena was to see if settlers were prevented from leaving the buses and if there was any attempt to terrorise or coerce them.

Watching teenage girls in Red Cross aprons trying to distribute water in half-a-dozen plastic beakers to 8000 people had given me rather more to think about. The only Kalashnikov I saw was being held upside down on its webbing strap by a policeman on the grass verge. I said so, and the TV journalist shook his head, pitying my

girlish naivety. "They use the small Kalashnikov," he said. He thrust a hand into the back of his designer jeans: "They stick them down here." The hypothesis was ridiculous. I had seen dozens of settlers desirous of relieving themselves squatting out of sight of the buses. If they chose to walk away there was little any gun could do to stop them. Crowds are not controlled by hidden guns. One shot after a fleeing settler and 123 buses would empty faster than any number of guns could cover them. The only people who could have carried Kalashnikovs large or small, would have been the drivers' assistants, whose job is to check oil and water and air pressure, change tyres, dig buses out of rockfalls, mudslides and ditches and relay settlers' requests to the drivers. I pointed out that there is little point in cluttering up the back of your underpants with a small Kalashnikov if you are wearing a boiler-suit, but the point was not taken.

The question of "voluntariness" in resettlement is complicated. Drought victims inspire a good deal of possessiveness on the part of those who care for them, who are slow to realise how irksome and even unbearable they may find such care. In one day at Asaita, the shelter authorities watched a quarter of the Afars being tended there uproot their families and make for the upland grazing, because it had rained in the hills. Many of the weakest family members must have died, but there was little the shelter administration could do to stop them, for Ethiopian famine shelters have no perimeter fences and no army of guards to stop people coming and going, unlike, say, British holding centres for Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong. The decision to move is usually taken by the "family head," most often a man and the strongest surviving member of the group. The decision is almost never unanimous. Throughout the journey the family mulls over the decision with tears, pleas to reconsider, dark prognostications of disaster and a general distrust of the outsiders who have come up with the suggestion of orderly resettlement. If the travellers on the 123 buses had been euphoric, I should have suspected that resettlement had been presented to them as a cushy option, or that Eritrean claims that each family is promised an ox were true. Certainly the settlers are told that the land they are going to is fertile, but so it is. As I clambered into the buses, trying not to trample the skinny limbs of people who, having never sat on chairs in their lives, could not stay put on the slippery bus seats and gravitated naturally to the floor, I longed to reassure them and the some easing of the tension in their faces. The RRC official in charge of the stopover simply said: "They are leaving their homeland," and made no attempt to jolly them up or patronise them.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission must itself take some responsibility for the persistence of wilful disinformation about resettlement. Despite a showy three-

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission must itself take some responsibility for the persistence of wilful disinformation about resettlement.

piece pin stripe exterior the RRC "public relations" department is lazy, incompetent and disorganised. After a week of waiting for my itinerary and travel permits to be organised, during which I haunted the RRC PRO's office, when I finally got to Asosa, my arrival was totally unexpected. The project director was "in the field" and his subordinates, who had never seen a journalist at Asosa before, were not at all sure that they should offer me accommodation. The project director, run ragged coping with the arrival of 25,000 settlers a week, some of them in pretty wobbly condition, would have been perfectly justified in refusing to put himself at the disposal of an unannounced visitor, my journey of 700 kms over unmade roads could well have been in vain. I was eventually given a bed in the RRC guesthouse where there was neither water nor light. The key to the toilet block could not be found. Even in the town we could not find anything to eat.

At dawn next morning I was awoken by a terrific clanging which turned out to be made by a flock of red eyed pigeons dancing on the tin roof of the guesthouse. I watched as the RRC workers emerged from the army tent—they are housed in—and wandered off into the elephant grass with their toilet paper. Then they washed their faces and cleaned their teeth using a scant jam tin of water, respectfully averting their eyes from the solitary foreign female coated with red dust sitting on the guesthouse steps watching them. Later, someone came shyly to ask if I would like to share their breakfast of black tea and an army biscuit. By seven o'clock they had all gone off on truck beds and tractors to work. Clearly Asosa was far from being a soft option for them either, but they went to their work with a will.

Comrade Tesfaye, project director, was happy to have me see anything I cared to, but as my presence was still unofficial, we had to consult the local branch of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Resettlement Section. We found it in a thatched hut. Comrade Kumilachew rose from his desk of canes laid across poles driven into the earth and put himself at my service. Then they both turned to me and asked "What would you like to see?" The itinerary we followed was completely spontaneous, for it consisted of me uttering whatever came into my head, and the driver turning the wheel and plunging down yet another farmtrack, past churches, mosques and clinics—all *tukuls*—nursery beds, vegetable gardens, model *tukuls*, riverside laundries, the forge, the charcoal burning class, the pottery school, the football pitch, the tailoring school. At the horticulture project we surprised a young Tigrayan taking a bath in the little dam. As his loincloth was drying on a bush twenty yards away, he had to crouch in the knee deep water until I had finished inspect-

ing carrots and silver beet, onions and cabbages.

Nobody had the faintest idea that I was there to be impressed. They all assumed that I had come to help, and poured out all their grievances, which had nothing to do with their own discomforts, and all to do with the job they had come so far to do. The nurse practitioner in his *tukul* clinic gave me a list of the medications he was lacking. His worst problem was that acute cases had to be carried on litters to the Russian "mobile" hospital which was firmly anchored in tents in Asosa township. The Russian hospital was the one thing I was not allowed to see, on the grounds of "communicable disease" the Russians said. Certainly I saw far too many litters converging on Asosa town, the new arrivals had clearly brought diarrhoeal disease with them. I thought rather angrily of all the four wheel drive vehicles parked outside the Addis Ababa Hilton, as we passed the sweating litter bearers trotting along the farmtracks, 15 kms or so from the town.

Asosa resettlement project already produces 3,000 kilos of honey a year by modern, rational methods. The hives painted cadmium yellow stand in gardens



The Anuak are astonishingly clean; an Anuak woman will go naked rather than put on a soiled dress.



Youngsters walk past the body of a victim of hunger at Korem in Ethiopia

It seemed to me monstrous, that when they (Ethiopian settlers) maintain so high a respect for the English-speaking culture, it expresses nothing but contempt for them, giving only emergency aid when the damage is done.

full of Evening Primrose and a furry variety of Catmint. The bee-keepers, nearly all trained settlers, asked me for seeds of new plants to try, and took me to see their Black Medick, which was not doing so well. There was nothing for it but to discuss the possibility that they were giving it too much water, and at the wrong time of day, embarrassed as I might feel at being taken for something more immediately useful than a mere journalist. On the edge of the irrigation channel I found a sinister yellow plant I know only too well. "What is it?" they asked anxiously. "It ruined our *noog* crop." *Noog* (*Guizottia abyssinica* if you're interested) is one of the typical aromas in Ethiopian cooking; the failure of this crop is rather crucial for morale. The weed was Dodder (*Cuscuta europaea*). I told them the botanical name so that they could ask the international agencies for help, but I thought that any British gardener who could see how hard and how earnestly both the settlers and the RRC workers were trying, would have done whatever he could to have shortened the odds against them.



Hungry children outside one of the famine relief centres in Ethiopia

The Ethiopians' loyalty to "English" values is the more striking because it has nothing to do with cupboard love, for we have denied them even the pittance of development funding which we gave in the past.

To the administrators in Addis the notion of opening up "virgin" land is intensely romantic; in fact virgin land produces plagues unheard of in areas of settled cultivation. I noticed that the legs of the beehives were stood in potsherds full of ash. "Termites," said the forestry officer, a waif who looked as if he could do with some supplementary feeding himself. The avenues of shade trees and clumps of windbreak he had planted were pitted by gaps, termites again. The settlers' *tukuls*, the store houses, 50 per cent of the crops after harvest and even wooden bridges across streams are all being eaten by termites. In January 1984, the FAO conducted a survey and trained RRC officers to apply Aldrin in solution to the termite mounds without endangering either the settlers or their bees or themselves. In December, Michael Miller, seconded from Oxfam to work as special projects director for the RRC wrote to Shell in Amsterdam to order 500,000 dollars worth of Aldrin, and has never been answered. Without hard curren-

cy there is probably no deal, and the little forestry officer will have to look on as the settlers' houses continue to collapse within a year. He asked me if I could find seeds of more termite resistant species besides the *Grevillea robusta* that he was planting everywhere, and I made another note. In fact the entire region selected for development from Asosa down to Jinka in Gamu Gofa is infested with termites. There are those who say with a sniff: "Well, there you are. They shouldn't be resettling those areas then," as if the world should be left to the thousand million ants that dwell in it, an argument unlikely to find favour with an Australian. Yet when I suggested that there was a case for direct technical cooperation with the Australian Forestry Commission, especially in the supply of termite resistant species, an Australian official in Addis laughed at me.

In almost every aspect of the resettlement project, the problems were the same. A massive investment of work and energy from RRC workers and settlers alike was being nullified by lack of resources. Men and women were being trained in tailoring shops on machines supplied by UNICEF but the total cloth allowance for the 62,000 families resettled in Welega is less than a metre per family. The tailoring remains an academic exercise. Abesha Berede, women's affairs officer of Asosa, explained: "Dress is not a priority." It was more remarkable that settlers who after months of gruelling work were still wearing the rags they had arrived in were still optimistic and cheerful. There were babies everywhere. The women peeping from the doorways smiled when I did. Every small plot was tilled and planted. The adult education classes were full, even though the teachers were settlers themselves, unskilled in pedagogic arts, equipped with nothing but blackboard, chalk and a few tattered text-books.

If you ask party workers and RRC officers what their primary objective is, they invariably reply: "to save life." Their principal responsibility is to keep the settlers fed and healthy. Food supplies are erratic, because resettlement must compete for the few vehicles that the RRC has at its own disposal. Vehicles donated by foreign aid organisations for famine relief may not be used to victual famine victims who have chosen resettlement. Nevertheless, a recent survey by the League of Red Cross Societies found that children in resettlement villages had a better weight-for-length ratio than children in control villages nearby, although the RRC has been able to distribute only wheat grain as food rations. The ration is more than a child can eat, but parents are not preventing from bartering the surplus for other necessities if and when they are available on the open market. Disease control is more of a problem, especially in Asosa, where the settlers must use surface water for drinking and cooking. The fact that all water must be fetched and carried uphill to the houses limits the amount of washing the people are

SPECIAL REPORT

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disposed to do, and flies cluster on dirty clothes and skin. The RRC does not have enough drill rigs to sink tubewells in each settlement, let alone each village. Storage tanks, such as the one being built by Oxfam at Dese transit shelter, are beyond the RRC's means. The consequences of lack of clean water supply are no worse for the settlers than they are for the majority of Ethiopians, but the settlers arrive in a particularly vulnerable condition.

The next priority in resettlement projects is the achievement of self-sufficiency, so that the impossibly expensive food lift from RRC warehouses can cease. This aim is still out of sight. Crops at Asosa must be weeded every 15 days. To each has come its own plague: the teff, the most important cash crop, is massacred by cut-worm. The sorghum is beset by rust, the wheat by mildew, and termites eat what little is harvested when it is in store. On the one hand, new varieties suitable for cultivation in relatively humid lowland, faster growing and able to defend themselves against opportunist weeds must be developed and on the other, the officers already trained in pest control need the equipment and the pesticide to do it. Some of the current research in biological methods of termite control could be carried out in resettlement areas in Ethiopia.

A third priority is conservation. This year the Asosa forestry officer will plant more than two million seedlings. Project workers constantly stress the need for economy in the use of firewood, but when the fire is the only source of light in the *tukul* in the evenings, there is no realistic possibility that the people will take to the use of the closed fuel-conserving stoves they have been taught to make out of local clay. The depredations of the termites in the tree plantations are therefore doubly disastrous.

Every farmer has been taught to use conservation methods, leaving uncultivated strips across the slopes to minimise run-off in the ploughed fields, ditching and draining in the pasture lands. Goats are completely banned, and the ban is reinforced by the peasants' committees. Hunting is illegal for most Ethiopians; the peasants in Asosa use their guns for crop protection.

Before I left Asosa, I made a courtesy visit to take my leave of the local WPE branch. The ideological officer and the women's affairs officer listened impassively as my minder from RRC public relations orated in Amharic for twenty minutes, then turned to me and asked in perfect English, what I thought of their resettlement effort. I was about to make a formal answer, when I realised that they really cared. For some reason their earnestness threw me, and I began to stammer all the wrong kinds of words, problems, difficulties, poverty, insur-

mountable odds...It sounded as if, after all I had seen, I was going to follow the line of those who sat back in their leather armchairs at the Addis Ababa Hilton and said: "It will never work"—those who will make the prophecy fulfil itself by starving resettlement of cheap and effective assistance. So I changed my tack and said: "I can't believe that if people in the rich countries had seen what I have seen they wouldn't rush to help you. You have done so much with so little. Everybody is working so hard, so far from home, in conditions of such privation and with so little hope of reward." I thought of all the RRC officers standing about me while I quizzed them about all their failures, spelt out for anyone to see on the wall chart in the operations room, all of them struggling to converse with me in English, the language that they learned their conservation theory in, from text books written by Englishmen lecturing at Addis Ababa University. It seemed to me monstrous, that when they maintain so high a respect for the English speaking culture, it expresses nothing but contempt for them, giving only emergency aid when the damage is done, and then pouncing on the slightest indication that any jot or tittle of it has been abused erecting whole scenarios of perfidy on a handful of misread signs.

The Ethiopians' loyalty to "English" values is the more striking because it has nothing to do with cupboard love, for we have denied them even the pittance of development funding which we gave in the past. In Asosa, cadres, party officials and RRC workers listened to the BBC World Service when they could, though they often heard statements about Ethiopia which they knew to be false. They believed, as I believe, that all that was needed to repair the relationship between our two cultures was more information. Without exception, the Ethiopians involved in settlement trusted me and told me more than I could safely use without creating difficulties for them, especially where the Russians were concerned. As the landcruiser turned to leave, the women's affairs officer came shyly out to ask if I could perhaps send some English books. "There's not much to do in the evenings," she said, twisting her wedding ring. She didn't need to explain that her husband of a few months was working in another project in another remote part of Ethiopia. I wondered if the attitude of the British government would change if the post offices filled up with books, packets of seeds, bolts of cloth, do-it-yourself tubewell construction kits, bee-keeping manuals, tins of Aldrin, cups, plates, bottles, knives—all the things the settlers need, addressed to RRC Asosae, Welega, Ethiopia. And I realised why I had found it so difficult to speak when they asked me. I was ashamed.



The Russian hospital was one thing I was not allowed to see, on the grounds of "communicable disease" the Russians said. Certainly I saw far too many litters converging on Asosa town; the new arrivals had clearly brought diarrhoeal disease with them. I thought rather angrily of all the four wheel drive vehicles parked outside the Addis Ababa Hilton, as we passed the sweating litter bearers trotting along the farm tracks, 15 kms or so from the town.

Slow Poisoning

Multinational companies have turned India into a dumping ground for their rejected toxic pesticides while the government turns a blind eye

This is not the first time that a danger signal has been flashed. Nor is it going to be the last, considering the Indian government's track-record on such matters. It sleeps over warnings. When reminded repeatedly, it drags its feet. More often than not it treats them with callous disregard, giving in to the charming persuasions of multinational companies (MNCs) and the Indian units which have held hands with the MNCs in deriving profits and spreading ruination. It took a horrendous tragedy at Bhopal to realise the havoc that chemicals could wreak. The difficulty with the indiscriminate use of pesticides is that there might never be any indication of the damage that it can cause and yet the devastation could be more severe than even the Bhopal disaster. Toxic pesticides are quietly slow poisoning entire populations in the country. And the government, rather than banning or restricting their use, is widening their scope and reach.

According to a study of the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS), nearly 40,000 tonnes of pesticides whose use is either banned or highly restricted in the developed world, are being used with gay abandon everywhere in India. These could cause kidney failures, nervous breakdowns and even cancer. A few have been banned but they are outnumbered by those in use. India does not even have the kind of medical system which could detect the roots of fatal diseases to the flagrant use of

pesticides and other chemicals. While the developed countries are limiting the use of these chemicals and evolving alternative means of crop-preservation, India leads the third world in being a dumping ground for the same pesticides.

NISTADS has drawn up a list of ten pesticides on which tests have been conducted and found to be hazardous to human health, and which the developed world has rejected. Other independent sources feel that with the liberalisation of imports in the export-import policy of the government announced in April this year, several other, more lethal pesticides will make their way in to the Indian environment. But the pesticides being imported, produced and used in India at present form a formidable array of killers.

- **DDT**—A chlorinated hydrocarbon, the use of which is frighteningly common in India. The installed capacity for indigenous production of DDT is 9,144 tonnes per annum. In addition, nearly 2,000 tonnes of the white powder is imported every year. It enters the human body through food intake and deposits itself in the intestinal tracts. Small amounts of DDT deposits can cause damage of the liver, and can hamper the functioning of enzymes in the heart muscles. In some cases, it could prompt cancer.

- **Chlordane**—Another chlorinated hydrocarbon, this is much more volatile than DDT. Its inhalation could cause poisoning. Even otherwise, it can penetrate the human skin and

accumulate in the body. Frequent exposure to it can cause cancer.

- **Heptachlor**—It has a high capacity for storing itself in the human body where it decomposes into Heptachlor epoxide, said to be four times as dangerous as Heptachlor. It can cause fatal liver diseases.

- **Dieldrin**—If swallowed, it is about five times as toxic as DDT and when absorbed through the skin it can be 40 times as dangerous. It affects the nervous system and continuous exposure to it can cause cancer—an "extremely hazardous" chemical according to experts.

- **Aldrin**—A cousin of Dieldrin, it actually degenerates into Dieldrin in the human body affecting the liver and kidneys. This too leads to sterility and cancer. It has been labelled "highly hazardous" by experts.

- **BHC**—This too has the ability to cause cancer. In addition, it can cripple the nervous system and lead to tumours and reproductive disorders in human beings. Its most menacing quality is its persistence in its chemical form.

- **Lindane**—It can cause disorders of the liver and the brain. It is said to have a "profound and lasting effect on the central nervous system."

- **Dichlorovos**—Twice as toxic as DDT, it causes vision defects, headaches, nausea, cough, weakness and convulsions. In extreme cases it could lead to coma and finally death.

- **Endosulfan**—Inhalation of this pesticide could be fatal. Its main target: the central nervous system.

- **2,4-D**—This is among the most hazardous of the list of killer chemicals. 2,4-D is at times considered as dangerous as 2,4,5-T, which is used in the manufacture of chemicals weapons. What is more, 2,4-D is usually contaminated with Dioxin—one of the most lethal chemicals produced ever.

All these pesticides are banned in the United States of America but ironically, most of them originate in the US and are dumped on the third world markets. Other developed countries where some of these pesticides are produced have also banned or severely restricted their use by their own people. "The irony is," says the NISTADS study, "that when such

Farmers spraying crops with insecticides



severe restrictions have been imposed in the places of origin of these pesticides, the third world countries still continue to use them indiscriminately. Such highly toxic and condemned pesticides are easily available in the third world markets and the containers do not carry any warning or caution. This is because there is no restriction in the export policy of the developed countries. Moreover, there is a lack of proper legislation in the third world countries to control such a flow."

In India the import or manufacture of pesticides is regulated by the Insecticides Act of 1968, according to which a pesticide is required to be approved by the Registration Committee set up under the Act before its import or manufacture is allowed. Critics of the Act, however, maintain that this is a "weak statute" in which there is neither any provision of periodical investigation by the government nor any allowance for a person other than the government to conduct investigations and place complaints on the harmful effects of a certain pesticide. A seminar was held in New Delhi in May on the Bhopal gas tragedy and it is significant that several speakers attacked the basic pesticide policy of the government which had made Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) Bhopal its peg. Amitava Guha, one of the speakers, said that the government schedule includes 311 pesticides of which about 75 are banned in other countries. He added that in its new export and import policy declared in April 1985 "the government had given a wide allowance for those (banned) pesticides and that too under the Open General Licence (OGL) for import." This new list of pesticides according to him includes Endrin, Parathion, Disulphoton, Leptophos, Mevinphos, Nitrofen, DBCP, Calcium Arscnate, Azinophos Methyl and, most important, 2,4,5-T. Union Carbide, is also the largest producer of 2,4,5-T. This pesticide is banned in Japan, Norway, New Zealand, Philippines, USSR, Switzerland, Italy, Turkey and of course, the US. So lethal is 2,4,5-T that it is combined with other chemicals like Dioxin to enhance the effect of chemical weapons.

According to Guha, the existing law has many lacunae and there is nothing to prevent the MNCs from making India the dumping ground for chemicals rejected by the developed countries. Moreover, India is also being used as a laboratory for testing chemicals. This again has two facets, one of which Guha attacked. He said the multinational companies are researching for the development of

In 1973, the sugarcane crop in a large part of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and Haryana was dying. The diagnosis was simple: the damage was being done by the sugarcane pyrrilla, a tiny brownish-red insect. The cure, however, was proving to be difficult. The pest had infested over 2.8 million acres of sugarcane over four states (the total area under cultivation in 1973 was about four million acres) and was spreading to areas under wheat and maize cultivation as well as mango plantations. The pyrrilla had to be killed and quickly. There appeared to be only one way out—the intensive spraying of chemical insecticides from the air. In July, some efforts had been made at chemical control. However, these proved to be unsuccessful and between August and October, another round of spraying with insecticides of high toxic levels became necessary. But here too, there was a difficulty: the indiscriminate spraying of highly toxic chemicals would be a major health hazard.

It was then that Dr S N Banerjee, the then plant protection advisor of the government of India and later a project manager of the FAO, decided to use biological control, a revolutionary method of using other insects, animals or birds to kill the pests. Noticing that two insects, *tetrastichus pyrrillae* and *epipyrops melanoleuca*, which feed on pyrrilla eggs and the pest respectively, were beginning to develop, he recommended that no chemical control be adopted. "It was a big risk, as we were using biological control methods on a large scale for the first time, but it worked," said Dr Banerjee.

Within days the pests had been

killed. And not only was the sugar cane crop saved but it meant a saving of Rs four crores. The spraying of toxic chemicals over large areas was also avoided and there was no necessity for any pest control measures in the area till 1984. More important perhaps is the fact that it was a notable first, a case pesticide experts refer to as a 'classic' today.

Dr Banerjee, now chairman of a high powered body constituted by the ministry of agriculture which is examining whether pesticides such as DDT and Benzene hexachloride (Gamaxene) ought to be banned in India, claimed that biological control had a number of advantages over the use of chemical fertilisers. "Biological control," he said, "is almost free, and once a parasite and a predator have been established and introduced, there is no need for chemicals. Chemicals on the other hand are expensive and often pose health hazards for our farmers most of whom work bare bodied." He also claimed that biological control ensures the safety of the environment as chemical insecticides pollute the water, the soil and the air.

There are however, limitations to the use of biological control. Most pest killers are susceptible to change in climate and die out quickly. "Use of biological control also involves patience," said Banerjee. "It is a long term affair but farmers often spray the crops with insecticides when quick results are not available. Besides, biological control is more successful in areas where the variation in temperature is not very high and in insular or geographically separate regions."

Srinjoy Chowdhury

chemical and bacteriological weapons under the guise of agrotechnological research. It is a grey area, he said, where research for agrotechnology and chemical weapons is similar. He raised some pertinent questions. Though UCIL Bhopal, was facing losses for successive years why had its investment in research and development shot up to Rs 20 crores per year?

The other fact is the actual tests of disputed chemicals being conducted on the people of this country. In 1975 Hindustan Ciba Geigy Ltd, another giant among the manufacturers of pesticides, lined up more than three dozen Indian volunteers and

sprayed them with Nuvacron, a pesticide based on organophosphorus compounds. This was done regularly for four days. The volunteers stood on the ground while an aircraft sprayed them with the chemical. And although three experts—R R Rao, M R Marathe and S D Ganguli—declared that "no toxic pesticide induced symptoms were observed in volunteers upto 15 days after the exposure," this test raised a basic question of ethics. Do these multinational companies have the sanction to use "volunteers" in third world countries as guinea pigs? Ciba Geigy has in the last few years conducted several such tests on humans in third

Licensed to Kill

For the multinational drug companies, the Third World has always been the dumping ground for dangerous drugs. When there are protests there is a way out. These multinationals try to influence the government and circumvent drug regulations.

Realising that many so-called life-saving drugs had dangerous side-effects, the government issued a notification GSR 577(E) dated 23 July '83 under Section 10A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 banning the import into India of Amidopyrine, Metthapyrilene and its salts, Nialamide, Phenacetin and Practolol. On the same day, another notification was issued banning the manufacture and sale of 22 drugs including fixed dose combinations of vitamins with anti-inflammatory agents and tranquilisers, atropine in analgesics and antipyretics and strychnine and caffeine in tonics, all of which are widely used combinations in the country. The government, however, did not ban some drugs which were on the list submitted by the sub-committee of the Drugs Consultative Committee in 1980, recommending a ban. These drugs which are still consumed in India include combinations of penicillin with streptomycin, anti-histaminic (for allergy) with tranquilisers and more than one anti-histaminic drug.

The Hathi committee which was appointed by the government in 1974 to study the working of the pharmaceutical industry in India came out with a startling revelation that while 116 drugs were needed in India to meet basic health requirements, the multinationals had dumped about 15,000 drugs on the Indian market. In a report published in 1977, the World Health Organisation expert committee noted that just 200

drugs were essential in dealing with a majority of illnesses of the people of any country. Many third world countries immediately restricted the use of or banned a large number of drugs and even Bangladesh banned 1742 drugs in 1982.

In India, drugs are produced under licence, each licence being valid for two years. But often, licences are granted indiscriminately, and the warnings of the expert committees forgotten. The result, about 7,000 drug companies manufacturing around 30,000 drugs including a number of harmful ones are available in India. It appears that the licensing authorities are easily won over by the multi-nationals. One important example is the surfeit of non-essential tonics and vitamins in India, while there is a dearth of life saving drugs, especially for common tropical diseases like malaria or typhoid.

Some drug companies often market different drugs using the same ingredients for treating the same disease. There are, for instance, more than 50 companies, most of whom are multinationals or their associates in India, licensed to manufacture drugs for diarrhoea, though the WHO expert committee has recommended that diarrhoea can be effectively treated with oral rehydration salts (a combination of sodium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, potassium chloride and glucose).

Most of the developed countries including Japan, the USA, Venezuela, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, and Bangladesh have either banned or restricted the use of hydroxy-quinolone drugs which have dangerous after-effects. In India, however, more than 50 companies have licences to manufacture and market drugs containing hydroxy-

quinolone.

Some companies in India selling hydroxy-quinolone derivatives issue a warning on the packet of these drugs but the warning is itself misleading. It says "relatively prolonged and interrupted treatment with isolated hydroxy-quinolone derivatives in high dosages for more than 14 days is reported to have caused peripheral neuritis and damages to optic nerves in isolated cases." In fact, warnings are worded in such a way that they often mislead consumers. The word "isolated cases" is the favourite with drug companies.

Another instance of the violation of orders relating to banned drugs is the renewal of licence of M/s Organon Ltd. to manufacture oestrogen and progesterone drugs by the West Bengal drug controllers office despite the order to the governments of Maharashtra and West Bengal to ban from March 1983 the manufacture and from 30 June, the sale of these drugs.

The multinationals also make huge profits by overpricing their drugs in Third World countries. A survey conducted in 1975 showed that many drugs cost about 30 to 500 per cent more than their original price in Chile, 20 to 300 per cent more than in Peru, and about 100 to 800 per cent more than in Spain. Meanwhile, a litigation urging the government to take action against violation of rules is pending in the Supreme Court. The case filed by Dr Vincent Panikulangara, a lawyer of repute, seeks, that only 116 drugs recommended by the Hathi committee should be permitted for sale in the country.

Binoo John

world countries. In 1976 for example, it sprayed six Egyptian children with Galecorn which is suspected to lead to cancer. The result after just one spray, the children fell sick with urine poisoning and other abnormal symptoms including severe headaches and vomiting. Galecorn was taken off the markets the same year only to be reintroduced two years later by the same company!

Pesticides, even critics of the government's pesticide policy agree, are essential in a country where armies of insects and pests (nearly 700 varieties of them) ruin 20 per cent of the total food production every year.

The loss in terms of money is a phenomenal Rs 5,000 crores per year. That, however, makes no case for the indiscriminate use of hazardous chemicals whose ill effects are not even known to the real users. In village Deenabandhu in south India, a survey team found farmers sprinkling hazardous pesticides with naked hands. Of course, on the packet there was a warning note saying that the human body should not come in direct contact with the chemical but all that was in English which the poor Indian farmer does not understand. Another problem that has arisen with the indiscriminate use of

these chemicals, specially of DDT, is that certain varieties of pests have developed a resistance to them. In 1980 there were 432 species of pests resistant to one or the other form of pesticide whereas the number in 1954 was only 25.

The government, hung on short term plans, is giving the go ahead to the import and production of poisonous chemicals, thus polluting the atmosphere, and the food, causing congenital handicaps, affecting entire generations. One could say that the Bhopal tragedy is being enacted in a slow motion but on a larger scale.

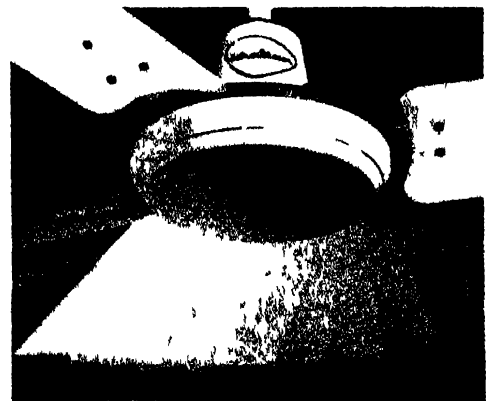
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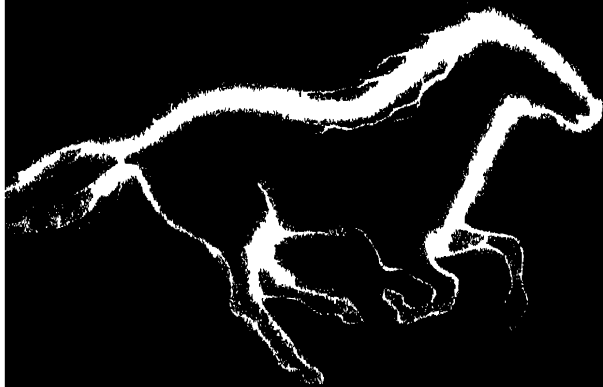


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A Celebration of Life

Sharon Butler reports from Washington on *Aditi*, the unique exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute, which forms part of the Festival of India in the USA

Joining in the Festival of India this summer, the Smithsonian Institute, the collection of world famous museums that flanks the Central Mall in Washington, is hosting a variety of exhibitions and activities under the general title "*Aditi*, The Festival of India at the Smithsonian." One exhibition, "The Sculpture of India 3000 BC to 1300 AD," opened at the National Gallery of Art in May. A recreation of an Indian *mela* will open out on the 5 acre mall this week. At the Freer Gallery is "The Arts of South Asia," and at the National Museum of American History this fall, will be "all sorts of painted stuff Indian chintz and its western counterparts." But the centerpiece of all the activities is "*Aditi* A Celebration of Life."

Upstairs at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington are the still lifes, stuffed animals and wax figures sitting motionless behind panes of glass. But downstairs on the ground floor of the museum is the *Aditi* exhibit, and from it comes

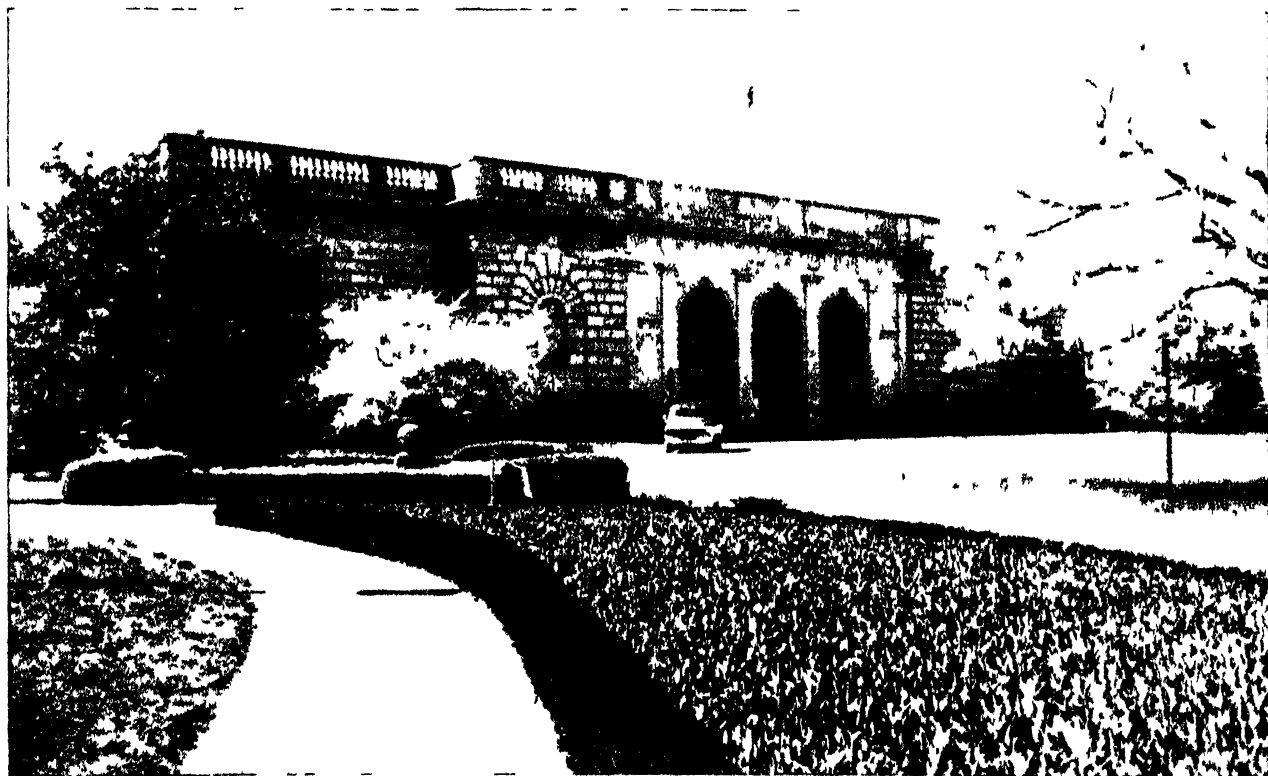
the exotic fragrances of the morning's *puja* and the plaintive strains of *baul* music. From time to time, a tiny brown boy in Rajasthani dress charges out, grabs the museum guard's walkie talkie, and puts it to his ear. "Museums should be about life, not about death," says Rajeev Sethi, who first conceived the exhibit seven years ago.

At its simplest level, *Aditi* is a slice of Indian life. The exhibit takes the visitor through a sequence of rooms and corridors, each depicting a rite of passage, a stage of life from fertility to marriage, to birth and childhood, to initiation and the final "moving out." Each stage is carefully explained by a neatly stencilled plaque tacked on the wall. Here in the section titled "Preparations for the Wedding," a plaque explains how in an Indian wedding gifts of sweets, clothing and jewellery are exchanged, how the marriage date is set by an astrologer, how "the future bride and bridegroom, curious and apprehensive about married life, are

instructed about its pleasures, pains and mysteries by relatives and friends through songs, riddles, and ritual activities." There in the section called "The Promised World," a plaque explains how throughout India "there is a strong sympathy for the unique inborn temperaments and abilities of a child during the early years of infancy—cultural traditions and means of play come gradually on their own and are valued for opening up worlds, rather than forcefully moulding the growing child."

But *Aditi* is much more than an explanation of a foreign culture. It is never so tame, for it is, as the subtitle of the exhibit says, "a celebration of life"—a celebration of Indian life to be exact. And it is in this aspect that

Aditi is something special. Unlike other cultural exhibits, *Aditi* is in perpetual motion. There are, as there must be, invaluable ancient objects encased for protection in temperature controlled glass cases. But *Aditi* comes to life as miniaturists, sculptors, magicians, dancers, bal



A view of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington

ladeers, toy makers, jugglers and musicians ply their wonderful arts and trades, giving new meaning and relations to the traditional and contemporary objects that surround them in the exhibit

The exhibition is a maze which at every turn reveals, delights, surprises, enriches, capturing the essence and spirit of India as well as the artistic details. *Aditi*—the abundant, joyful, unbroken, creative force that sustains and informs the universe—is everywhere recalled. "I genuinely do believe that art grows on trees," says Mr Sethi. No wonder, then, that *Aditi* is not confined to museum cases. "Art is not separate to sleeping, to eating, to raising a good crop, to looking after a child, or to making love," he says.

One day at the museum when Jivya Soma had filled the walls of his simulated mud hut with Warli painting, the American staff wondered what to do. "Just paint over it, and start again," said Mr Sethi. But the Americans were horrified. They brought boards to cover and preserve the painting, but Mr Sethi just took them down. "The moment you start making them conscious of this fact, that they are creating great art—already some American girls made them sign their names—then something is already gone."

Art, *Aditi* keeps saying, is embedded in life itself. It is in the *nawab's* nuptial chamber, where richly embroidered spreads and pillows cover the bed. But it is equally evident in the mud hut nuptial chamber, where Maithili paintings decorate the walls and mango leaves mark the entry. Art is there where the mundane meets the religious, in the twigs and rootlets which some anonymous Rajasthan artisan carved and painted to look like the figures from the *Ramayana* so that he could instruct his son. It is there in the terracotta cows and elephants that a child uses one day as offerings to the gods, and the next day for play. Art is there, caught up in the loud and happy *kacchighori* dance that Mithu Ram performs, in the giant leather sandals that cobblers in Karnataka make seeking the favour of Hanuman, in the multi-tiered oil lamps used in everyday worship, in the child's quilt, stitched together from old cloth, even in juggler Baira Shetty's tricks.

As the boundaries dissolve in art, there is a sense of continuity about *Aditi*. Village women, sitting on the ground, place their babies on their outstretched legs to massage them, just like the fifth century figurines on display in *Aditi*. The ancient wis-



Folk dancers performing during the opening of 'The Sculpture of India' exhibition (top), a Rajput painting on display at the *Aditi* (below)

dom and the ancient arts get passed on from generation to generation. Just as Ram Karan Bhopa learned the art of the story scroll balladeer from his father, so now as he sings about the exploits of the Rajput heroes depicted in the twenty foot long scroll behind him, his two sons, Sheesh Ram, ten years old, and Kailash four, quietly watch and learn.

And yet, *Aditi* is not about preserving the old. Some of the ancient arts do survive, but faced with the challenge of modernity, many are modified, abbreviated, adapted, and it is this story also which *Aditi* tells. Subal Bairagi, a *bahrupiya* who wanders through the halls of *Aditi*, laments that nowadays no one realises that he represents the gods' many forms. He just travels from fair to fair amusing the crowds.

In modern day, too, religious rites like *Ahoi Ashtami* get shortened from an eight day affair to a brief

puja. Ratan and company now mass produces a paper print of the deity, and it gets pasted to the wall in the urban home, supplanting the deity once fashioned in clay relief. Both are on display in *Aditi*.

Subir Pal from Krishnagar models perfect clay figurines, not of gods and goddesses, but of Indira Gandhi and one, soon to come, of Ronald Reagan. And Banku Patua, a story scroll painter who usually sings about mythological characters and moral themes, has begun a new scroll, telling of his trip to Washington. After a little coaxing—the scroll is still incomplete—he will sing for visitors the first verse. On 29 May at 8.30 pm, he arrived, he sings, and there at the American airport was Rajeev Sethi welcoming all the artisans with garlands and lozenges. But it was a funny place, this America. The bus had comfortable seats, and sped down the road on the right. Not at all, he sings, like "My Bangladesh."

The King and his Empire

For the Americans who are crowding into *Aditi*—around 3,000 a day—Rajeev Sethi cuts an almost regal figure in his white kurta and churidar, and the flowing earth-brown shawl he drapes around his shoulders. When he visits the exhibition in the morning—he is there nearly everyday—the children who perform in *Aditi* and some of the women rush to touch his feet. He joins in their morning puja. "Oh, you should have seen them," he marvels, describing the day these villagers went into the sub-basement of the National Museum of Natural History looking among the rocks for a deity. Their hands, he says, wandered over the objects, feeling for eyes and a nose. It didn't matter that the one they finally chose was of man-made fibreglass.

Aditi, Mr Sethi explains, had its origin seven years ago in New Delhi as an exhibit for the International Year of the Child. "But it's always reincarnated," he says, referring to the *Aditi* exhibition in London in 1982 and the one in Washington now. "It's never the same...You need to let the dialogue lead you to new fields." This incarnation, he promises, is its last. "We are trying to break the museum convention," he says as he wanders in the halls which he has transformed into tributes to the Indian way of life. "Museums should be about life, not about death. We are presenting something and nurturing it. We're not talking about celebrating what's gone."

Mr Sethi is more a director than a curator, for *Aditi* is a show more than an exhibit. Passing through the "wedding" section, he finds that Mithu Ram from the Bhat community, is still prancing gaily about on his horse (the *kacchi ghor* dance) even after Gulabi and Rajki Nath from the Kalbelia and Sopera communities in Rajasthan, have begun their wild wedding dance. He waves Mithu back to his place. With unbounded energy, Mr Sethi delights in guiding visitors through *Aditi*. "I didn't want a gallery that would intimidate people," he explains. "I wanted it to make them friendly, to help them reach out, and take them in." Everywhere in *Aditi* volunteers are stationed to answer questions and translate for visitors who want to talk to the performers and artisans.

Mr Sethi himself grabs the arm of A.K. Ramanujan, the linguist from the University of Chicago, who is here for a symposium in connection with *Aditi*, and points out a miniature bronze of the baby Krishna. When he reaches "Safeguarding the Child," he gets down on the floor to demonstrate the posture of a mother massaging her infant. When he reaches the juggler in "Initiation into Learning," he is suddenly struck by a new idea, and latches onto an unsuspecting elder-



A folk dancer performing at *Aditi*

ly American woman to tell her about it. In the "Welcoming the Child" section, he stops to say something. "To me, this is *Aditi* in all its essence," Mr Sethi tells his visitors, pointing to a patchwork quilt (a *gudri*). He hushes the musicians, and pauses for effect. In the quilt, he sees the eastern notion that all parts, no matter how worn or simple, belong to the whole and must return to it. There is even a goddess, *Chitharaya Ma* (Lady of the Tatters), who presides over the making of the quilt, Mr Sethi remarks with undisguised reverence. Even in the simplest, most common things, one can invoke the divine.

Mr Sethi is not a purist. He doesn't bother about what is old and what is new; ancient runs into the contemporary in *Aditi*. In fact, he promotes the application of traditional crafts to new forms. He told Chandrakala Devi that he didn't want to portray Indian weddings in photographs. You show it in your way, he told her. So she made for *Aditi* not four-handed goddesses of fertility and abundance, but a marvellous three-quarter scale wedding night room in papier-mache that took her nine months.

Finally, Mr Sethi points to some objects in a glass box, but suddenly he lapses for a moment into a contemplative stream of consciousness. "Why am I showing this?" he asks himself quietly, pensive, almost philosophical. "If you try to preserve it, nothing will happen." It would be sheer "romanticism," he goes on, confessing his "disturbance within." "What I'm constantly asking for," he says, "is new things. What do we invent?" Then his eyes light upon Kumudini Devi, who is weaving *sikki* grass into toys and boxes and trays. "She did dresses before, and now she finds a new way to express herself, so she makes these," Mr Sethi says, now thoroughly cheered. "That excites me—as a survival." There is another thing which excites him, he says, as he calls on Mohammed Yusuf to perform the trick which Mr Sethi calls "National Integration." The magician stuffs coloured handkerchiefs into a container, talking about the many languages and people of India. Then, as he bursts into a song, he pulls the handkerchiefs out, and now they are linked together end to end. Sharon Butler, Washington

WHY PAK WANTS THE BOMB

K. SUBHRAHMANYAM, an authority on defence matters, argues why Pakistan should develop its nuclear potential, using the same logic that nuclear powers advance to justify their possession of nuclear arms

Pakistan's attempt to acquire a nuclear weapon capability is being condemned in various parts of the world (especially in the western industrial world and also in India) as being unethical and irrational. In the American media, Pakistan is portrayed as attempting to steal secrets and circumvent export regulations of other countries in order to advance its nuclear programme. In this country too the Pakistani effort is viewed in emotional terms. One section of people in our country would attribute the origin of Pakistani sin as a response to the Indian sin (the Pokhran explosion) and exhort that both of us should jointly expiate our sin. Such emotional approach does not help in resolving the issue or offering a sound basis for policy making. Pakistani action may have an adverse impact on our security but that does not necessarily make it unethical. If the issue of danger and insecurity arising out of nuclear weapons is to be tackled, it has to be done on a rational basis taking into account the global strategic environment and cannot be tackled merely between India and Pakistan even if there is an abundance of goodwill and mutual trust, which of course are unfortunately not there at this stage.

If I were a Pakistani I would have opted for the bomb and I find the Pakistani decision rational and sensible in their circumstances. Both India and Pakistan are agreed that the use of nuclear weapons should be declared a crime against humanity and they ought to be banned. Pakistan has repeatedly voted in the UN for a resolution to that effect, moved initially by India and subsequently adopted by the non-aligned nations as a whole. While 126 nations, including China and the Soviet Union, are for the resolution, the NATO countries have been persistently opposing

it, arguing that they need to rely on the nuclear deterrence doctrine and the threat of use of nuclear weapons for their security. The global strategic norms are unfortunately laid down by the western nations. If nuclear weapons and nuclear war doctrines are legal and ethical for them, only racist arrogance and self-righteousness make the western media portray that developing nations should not have the nuclear weapons while the western countries have an unlimited right to proliferate. Unfortunately many Uncle Toms in the developing world, including our own country, accept uncritically the thesis that nuclear weapons are all right in the hands of the white *sahibs* but not in the hands of brown and black nations.

If nuclear weapons and nuclear war doctrines are legal and ethical for the west, only racist arrogance makes the western media portray that developing nations should not have nuclear weapons...

Unfortunately many Uncle Toms in the developing world accept the thesis that nuclear weapons are all right in the hands of the white *sahibs* but not in the hands of the brown and black nations

Some virtuous people argue why we should follow the bad example of industrialised nations and have these weapons. Since we proclaim that we prefer nuclear disarmament why don't we practise what we preach? The real world is more complicated than that. The law does not permit killing but it permits the right of killing in self defence. Working for nuclear disarmament and at the same time having nuclear weapons to safeguard the national interest and security of one's own country in a world of sky-rocketing nuclear proliferation are not contradictory. That is the position of China and the Soviet Union and if the west would accept the position that, use and threat of use, of nuclear weapons are illegitimate and they should be banned then there will be a common ground to initiate steps for nuclear disarmament. Such common ground exists for bacteriological weapons (which have been outlawed), chemical weapons (for which there is a Geneva protocol and further negotiations are taking place to ban them) and for radiological weapons (to ban which negotiations are taking place too). So long as nuclear weapons are deemed legitimate, Pakistan has as much right to have them as the US, the UK, France, Soviet Union and China. Those who warmly endorse the Non-proliferation Treaty should recognise that the treaty is the fountain-head of legitimacy of nuclear weapons.

The western justification for nuclear weapons is that they face the larger conventional forces of the Soviet Union and hence they need the nuclear weapons. This is asserted in spite of the fact that in history the Russians and Americans have never fought a war (except for a brief clash in Siberia in 1918) and for the last 40 years peace has prevailed in Europe. The western strategists

argue that peace has prevailed mainly because of nuclear deterrence. The Pakistanis may well say that they face the Soviets in Afghanistan and Indians in the east and both Soviet Union and India are more powerful nations which can be deterred only by Pakistani nuclear weapons. Since there have been three wars between India and Pakistan in the absence of nuclear deterrence, in Pakistani perception, nuclear deterrence may be able to bring about peace and stability as it is claimed to have done in central Europe and along Sino-Soviet borders.

It is argued that nuclear weapons do not increase security and a miniscular nuclear arsenal against the vast arsenals of others does not constitute an adequate deterrent. The first part of the argument is totally rejected by the NATO, Warsaw Pact countries and China whose experience is that nuclear weapons have ensured their security and have stabilised the situations in central Europe and along the Sino-Soviet border. The second part of the argument is also not accepted by France, China and Britain. France can be wiped off the face of the earth in a few minutes by the Soviet arsenals and so also China. But in the process some two or three Soviet cities will get destroyed. While the wiping off of France and China would not benefit the Soviet Union, the loss of two cities will hurt and no rational Soviet decision-maker will consider sacrificing two or three of his cities even to destroy the whole of France or China. This in the strategic parlance, is called proportionate deterrence. A bee dies when it stings. No human being thinks of going and tangling with the bees and subjecting himself to the discomfort of a bee-sting though the bee will die in the process. The probability of destruction of two or three Soviet or Indian cities and the uncertainty involved would be adequate deterrence for Pakistan. Even today China practises only such proportionate deterrence vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The US strategists have tried to propagate that no nuclear arsenal other than those of the two super-power arsenals is credible. But in practice the US behaves differently. Of late the US strategy is shifting from treating certainty as the basis of credibility for deterrence to uncertainty as the basis.

Some of the American strategists who are more perceptive, understand these nuances and they have tried to explain the rationale underlying the Pakistani nuclear strategy. Prof. Stephen Cohen points out: "Pakistan belongs to that class of

Given the delicate triangular relationship Pakistan has with Iran and the Arabs and the possibility of Arab monetary support drying up, going nuclear makes eminent sense for Pakistan to sustain its security and sovereignty

states whose very survival is uncertain, whose legitimacy is doubted and whose security related resources are inadequate. Yet these states will not go away nor can they be ignored. Pakistan (like Taiwan, South Korea, Israel and South Africa) has the capacity to fight, to go nuclear, to influence the global strategic balance (if only by collapsing) and, lastly, is in a strategic geographical location, surrounded by the three largest states in the world and adjacent to the mouth of the Persian Gulf..." Pakistan is following the successful examples of Israel and South Africa in following a policy of deterrence through nuclear ambiguity

Unlike the Fifties and Sixties, the cost of nuclear weapons in relation to that of non nuclear ones, has tended to come down. Secondly, a nuclear arsenal, though it may not be up-to-date and modern (as China's is not) is able to deter adversaries both against nuclear and conventional attacks mainly through the uncertainty involved in the proportionate deterrence. Otherwise China will be totally helpless against the awesome nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union and its enormous conventional fire power. Pakistan understands well that it cannot compete with India in terms of sophisticated conventional weapons or nuclear weapons in the coming decades. China has failed to come to the rescue of Pakistan both in 1965 and 1971. Given the delicate triangular relationship Pakistan has with Iran and the Arabs and the possibility of Arab monetary support drying up, going nuclear makes eminent sense for Pakistan to sustain its security and sovereignty. That India may proclaim from housetops its good intentions vis-a-vis Pakistan, has no bearing on these security calculations. In India we are obsessed with Pakistani accusations against India and have a sense of

guilt. But India is only one factor in Pakistani security calculations. It has far more complex problems of security vis-a-vis Afghanistan and Iran about which it does not dare say much in order to maintain the image of Islamic solidarity. Pakistan's offer of pie-in-the-sky proposals of mutual inspection to India when they will not even give details of their budgets, plans, programmes, etc. relating to atomic energy is only to ensure that it can continue with its posture of nuclear ambiguity which it vitally needs to face problems of security other than India. At present India may be the biggest factor in Pakistan's security calculations but as Prof. Stephen Cohen has rightly pointed out, Pakistan is in a vital geostrategic location and India may not in the long run prove to be its main security preoccupation.

Pakistan does not have the basic stability of India, since as a nation-state it is conceived in terms of Punjabi domination over the rest just as the Chinese state is. In such circumstances it is natural for the majority to think of a symbol of power to dominate over the rest. The nuclear weapon serves this purpose for China and Pakistan. The nuclear capability was described as the 'sword of Islam' by Bhutto who thought in terms of civilisation when he wrote that only the Islamic civilisation was without any nuclear capability. That position was about to change due to his efforts. When that happens Pakistan will have a commanding position in the Islamic world which should in turn give it political and economic benefits.

One may ask whether the fallout of nuclear war should not worry the Pakistanis. Not more than it worries the people and leaders of the industrialised world which have built massive arsenals. People ask in pious horror what would have happened if Iran and Iraq had nuclear weapons. The answer is in that case there would have been no Iran-Iraq war as the European and American nations which killed 70 million people only 40 years ago and nearly 100 million people in the first half of this century have stopped fighting in their national territories under the threat of nuclear annihilation. The Americans and Europeans have not stopped fighting. Most of the 20 million people killed in the 150 conventional wars and instances of major violence in the developing world since the Second World War (a charge continuously hurled at the developing world and about which many of our Uncle Toms feel very guilty) were killed by Americans and Europeans in Korea, in Indo-China and in the

anti colonial wars of Algeria Mozambique Angola Zimbabwe and elsewhere. More explosives were dropped on three Indo Chinese states between 1965 and 1975 by the Americans than were manufactured in all history up to that point of time. If the Nuremberg laws and the Yamashita judgment were made applicable in the post World War II era many presidents prime ministers foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of staff of the leading white nations would have mounted the scaffold. The holocaust in the developing world carried out with weapons manufactured in the developed world and actually fired by the troops from the developed world is not even recognised. The risks of a

nuclear weapon being used rationally by a Zia ul Haq or a leader of the developing world are not higher than those in respect of leaders of the five established nuclear weapon powers and their armed forces at a time of crisis. The Indo Pakistan wars were fought in a far more civilised manner than wars in Indo Chinese countries Algeria and elsewhere. In such circumstances it should not be surprising if Pakistanis feel confident that nuclear weapons in the subcontinent will be used only to sustain deterrence and not used operationally. Therefore the nuclear option for Pakistan does not have very high risks.

Pakistani nuclear capability poses a problem for India and India has to

counteract effectively to safeguard its own security and interests. But neither shrill invectives on Pakistan's unethical conduct nor a sentimental call for both countries to renounce nuclear weapons (totally ignoring Pakistan's other security problems) are going to be of much help. Those who argue in favour of the latter including the Pakistanis if they are sincere have not thought about Pakistan's security problems. On the other hand I suspect the Pakistanis have thought through their security problems have chosen rationally their nuclear option but are insincere in their offer to renounce the weapon along with India. With some sophisticated diplomacy their bluff can easily be called.

The Case Against the Bomb

Pakistani expert AKHTAR ALI thinks that Pakistan's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons are neither justified nor prudent

On 17 May 1974 India exploded a nuclear device for "peaceful" purposes. Although the Indian intentions should have been clear, at least since 1971, it appeared that the Pakistan government was surprised. While the ensuing alarm and panic in Pakistan had not subsided, Mr Bhutto's government sought to acquire a reprocessing plant from France. The reprocessing deal could not be consummated due to strong American pressure, despite the fact that the most stringent and complete safeguards had been accepted by Pakistan. It was argued that the technical rationale for erecting this plant was at best dubious, as neither had Pakistan any LWR reactor where the reprocessed nuclear material could be recycled, nor was there any declared plan to have breeder reactors where depleted uranium could be recycled.

The economic justification presented by our nuclear bureaucracy became a subject of ridicule, as Pakistan clearly lacked the resources needed to finance the erection of 24 nuclear reactors. More sobering statements have been issued by PAEC lately, on this account. Three to five nuclear reactors are being talked about now. To a number of Pakistanis, contrary to the apprehensions of the non-proliferationists, the military

rationale of the reprocessing plant was even more dubious, as Pakistan did not have any unsafeguarded plutonium producing reactors.

Also Pakistan embarked upon a project for enriching uranium. It was, so to say, a nuclear *coup d'état* as no one could have seriously predicted that a country like Pakistan could initiate such an intricate and complex project. After detecting Pakistan's procurement activities abroad for the components of the centrifuge cascade, the Carter administration blocked aid to Pakistan and banned the exports of high technology equipment nuclear or non nuclear to Pakistan. After an initial tight lipped silence followed by vehement denials, Pakistan did only belatedly acknowledge the existence of the uranium enrichment project.

Since 1979 every year repeated forecasts have been made by institutions in India, the US and other countries that a Pakistani nuclear explosion was imminent and might come the following year. It never came, and it is only recently that the forecasts have been "revised" to well in the late Eighties. The Reagan administration has reversed the pressurising tactics of its predecessor, and has agreed to provide substantial military-economic assistance to Pakistan in the form of a \$3.2 billion dollar package deal, in a hope to reap multiple benefits.

The Indian nuclear explosion has created a difficult situation for Pakistan's policy makers. There are

two sets of questions relevant to Pakistan: first, what are the real objectives of the Indian nuclear programme. The related questions are what could be the possible motivations and incentives for India to acquire a nuclear capability. Is the 1974 explosion merely a peaceful experiment, an attempt to acquire prestige and recognition, or is it a portent of a nuclear programme of a profoundly military nature? The second set of questions is: should Pakistan acquire a nuclear capability if India goes nuclear? If India does not convert its "peaceful" device to an actual bomb capability, the answer is almost clear, although some Pakistanis would continue to urge for a nuclear capability to compensate for the conventional Indian advantage of size, number and sophistication. Fortunately this logic and reasoning has found little support in Pakistan. The choice of response in case India goes nuclear is, however, not obvious and clear cut.

It has been amply demonstrated that a political base in India for making nuclear weapons does exist, it cannot be inferred or argued that the political base could necessarily be utilised by the existing or future political leadership of India to embark upon a nuclear weapons programme. Cognizance must, of course, also be taken of the possibilities that the security environment and perceptions of India in the Eighties may be substantially different from what they were in the late

Excerpted from *Pakistan's Nuclear Dilemma* by Akhtar Ali published by Economic Research Unit Karachi

Sixties and may cause a diametric shift in thinking and policy

What possible reasons and motivations could India have to go nuclear? There could have been a mix of factors impelling India onto a nuclear path, of which the more important could be the scientific thrust, recognition and prestige, security perceptions vis-a-vis PRC and the political objectives of becoming a reckonable Middle Power, and the leader of the non aligned world, and perhaps a regional gendarme. Logically, behind the nuclear explosion of 1974, the scientific pressures should have been supreme. After separating plutonium and testing it in the *Purnima* reactor, the disciples of Bhabha (the founder of Indian nuclear programme and the first chief of Indian Atomic Energy Commission) should have become restive and an elitist political party could not have afforded to have ignored them. Of course it would be stretching the argument rather too far to term the explosion as an effort by a weak political leadership to rally support around itself. Whether Mrs. Gandhi had an eye on the domestic fall out of the explosion is not known, but certainly her defeat by the Janata Party three years after the explosion does indicate that people of India either did not give much importance to the explosion or were not prepared to give her the credit. In fact in the post explosion period except the bomb lobbyist elites, domestic politics has not involved the nuclear issue.

India has undeniably reaped some benefits from her explosion although the Indian explosion has robbed the bomb itself of its awe, and belittled the device more than the prestige and recognition bestowed upon India. The motivation of acquiring prestige and recognition of its technical prowess would be irresistible to a country like India, which has been known and recognised for her poverty, but about whose industrial progress little was known to the outside world. This recognition undoubtedly was the right of India, but what is not so certain is, whether only a nuclear explosion could have made that possible. Perhaps Indian policy-makers found it to be the most convenient short-cut.

While the security motivations may cease to exist or be ameliorated as a result of an Indo Chinese rapprochement, due to increased Indian conventional defence capabilities, and improvement in the general security environment, the bomb may be considered by Indian policy makers to be an essential pre-

quisite for the achievement of their political objectives of acquiring a reckonable Middle Power status. If these objectives assume strength and supremacy in the Indian list of priorities, and a positive nexus is established between the achievement of these objectives and the bomb, this could be the one deciding factor in leading India to a nuclear path. Indeed, the political aspirations of a sizable sector of the Indian elite may include a permanent seat at the Security Council. Such aspirations have never been voiced openly, but lurk between the lines in the writings of eminent men of establishment in India. It has been argued by them that the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) with a population of 800 million, possessing nuclear weapons could not be ignored by the US, and was seated in the Security Council. What, then, should be the prospects

Many Pakistanis are under the illusion that with a nuclear explosion, Pakistan would become a nuclear power. This appears to be too naive to be given attention, but intelligent and responsible individuals have been victims of this myth

of a nuclear India with a 500-odd million people!

One may argue that a "peaceful" nuclear explosion in essence means a nuclear weapon capability. If a positive political decision for going ahead with the nuclear weapons programme is made by India and if its nuclear and space programme continues unhampered, in a matter of time (the exact span would depend on the nature and scope of the nuclear capability sought), it could attempt to convert its "peaceful" capabilities to a military nuclear capability of an intermediate or sophisticated nature. This conversion may not, however, be easy. It would require much more compelling reasons and political determination to embark on this conversion than was required for the 1974 explosion. The odds before India are many. This conversion might tantamount to buying more "insecurity and conflict" and to selling out the

non-alignment objectives of India. And it is our fervent hope that Indian policy-makers would carefully evaluate the implications of such a venture.

Many Pakistanis are under the illusion that with a nuclear explosion, Pakistan would become a nuclear power. This appears to be too naive to be given attention, but we find that intelligent and responsible individuals have been victims of this myth. Another popular myth is that after acquiring a few bombs, Pakistan would be able to 'deter' conventional or nuclear attack from India. This line of thinking is borrowed from the East West nuclear competition. But in fact, deterrence is brought about by the capability of a disarming pre-emptive strike, resulting in excessive damage to the adversary, or by the ability to survive the pre-emptive strike and having a counter strike capability. Such a situation is brought about only in two cases: (a) nuclear asymmetry, that is, when the adversary does not possess similar weapons, (b) in a sophisticated nuclear regime on both sides, brought about after years of development and scores of billions of dollars of expenditure. In fact, we find that in this race, enough is not enough. Even after possessing the capability of destroying each other several times, both the Super Powers find substantial reasons to further develop their capabilities. It is obvious that a rudimentary nuclear capability with in the possible reach of Pakistan in a decade or so does not achieve any one of the prerequisites of a deterrent.

Another question is whether Pakistan would benefit from the prestige or recognition fall out of a nuclear explosion, if ever she decides to carry out such an explosion. As we have discussed earlier, the Indian nuclear explosion of 1974 has dispelled the awe and exclusivity of nuclear weapons or devices, and the worldwide debate which has followed has made it a common knowledge that exploding a nuclear device is not a very difficult task. India could do it, and countries of even smaller industrial base can do it also. Nevertheless, India has benefited from the prestige effect. It is not automatically deducible that Pakistan would also benefit as much on this account by exploding a nuclear device. With widespread knowledge of the ease with which countries with even smaller industrial bases could explode the devices, and with the increasingly active public opposition to nuclear weapons in the industrialised countries, the Pakistani explosion might be construed as a bizarre

act and may invite disgust rather than prestige. On the other hand, one may question as to whether Pakistan has any compelling reason for pursuing prestige and recognition objectives. As has been discussed earlier India had a number of reasons to do so. Had Carter's reign and the political conditions of his tenure continued, there might have been some motivations for doing something to acquire recognition or at least a nuisance value. In the present political conditions and the ones to possibly follow in the foreseeable future, and looking at the recognition and importance awarded to Pakistan in the wake of Afghan problem and the insecurity in the Gulf, any additional effort in this direction could be superfluous and counterproductive. Neither could there be any foreseeable commercial advantage of such prestige or recognition obtained through exploding a nuclear device.

It may be argued and perhaps rightly so that Pakistan's efforts in the development of nuclear fuel cycle technologies should be welcomed by those who are opposing nuclearisation of the subcontinent. Pakistan's posture has provided more life and determination to the non-proliferation efforts of the world community. Had counter pressures not been developed by Pakistan, India might have been legitimised as a quasi nuclear power. The concern aroused by Pakistan's capability to follow suit, has not allowed the pressures on India to be eased, which may be applied even more rigorously in future. A careful manipulation of this leverage by Pakistan may result in a better deal from the West and may increase the political barriers against India for her efforts to enhance her nuclear capability. An overt and tactless demonstration of this leverage could of course produce just the opposite effects.

Suffice it to say that India having the advantage of early start, size and sophistication, Pakistan cannot have either the first or the more difficult second strike capability. Until more than a decade ahead Pakistan would have conventional aerodynamic type delivery vehicles and would probably be facing the ballistic vehicles of India. Obviously the pre-emption capabilities would be with the ballistics, not with aerodynamics. It must be clearly understood by the policy makers in Pakistan that India would certainly launch a speedy nuclear programme of a sophisticated nature (which is well within its capabilities) once Pakistan carries out a nuclear explosion. Thus instead of being a deterrent, a rudimentary nuclear capability might attract aggression

and pre-emption. The incentives to launch conventional attack with the objectives of totally smashing Pakistan's military base would be tremendous.

It would be infinitely superior for Pakistan if a non nuclear regime could be maintained in the subcontinent. Pakistan would never be in a position to acquire a nuclear capability matching that of India, whereas a deterrence is brought about only by nuclear symmetry, and not by a nuclear capability alone. It would be fatal for Pakistan to attempt to equalise the present Indian nuclear lead by a nuclear explosion. This would set in a chain of events which would eventually lead to a formally nuclearised India or subcontinent which is against Pakistan's security interests. Nothing should be more welcome than if India feels contented with its existing nuclear status and does not bring in nuclear

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dimensions to Pakistan's security problems. It must be emphasised that Pakistan's nuclear explosion would be the *coup de grace* to the concept of a Nuclear Free Zone in South Asia and would generate ultimate motivations for India to go further on its nuclear path. Thus, the advice to Pakistani policy makers would be to go slow, to avoid any hasty demonstration of new muscle, and exhibit a more compromising and cooperative attitude towards the non proliferation efforts of the world community. It is gratifying to note that a more cautious and realistic posture has been adopted by the present administration in Pakistan.

The moot point is that though the explosion of Indian nuclear device is a serious event, it does not create an immediate threat to Pakistan's security. Of course, if the Indian nuclear programme continues unabated, it would pose a security problem to Pakistan in the medium and long

run. Thus, a short term equaliser or tit for tat will not improve the security environment, but would destroy whatever meagre base exists today to keep the subcontinent non nuclear. A diversified industrial base and a self reliant nuclear power industry would make far important a contribution towards meeting the possible mid term to long term security threat created by a projected nuclear India. A process oriented, rather than a product oriented, development approach is therefore recommended. Politics of confrontation at this embryonic stage of nuclear development would do little to achieve an environment of security in the long run and would preempt the evolution of future options.

Even if the Pakistani leadership agrees to get involved in the Arab Israeli conflict in a more direct manner and offers its bomb, which in itself is highly improbable, it is physically impossible to effect the actual transfer. In peace time there would hardly be any Arab country, except perhaps Libya, who would be willing to meddle with nuclear weapons, at least in the present and foreseeable future political and security environment. And to many, a bomb in the Libyan hands might be a threat more to Arabs themselves. Only a SI BM or IRBM capabilities with Pakistan, which may not be plausible even by the turn of the present century, could pose a nuclear threat to Israel.

The viability of an Arab nuclear force and a joint command and control system is highly questionable due to mutual hostilities, mistrust and differing political aims. Only individual Arab countries could acquire a nuclear capability and offer some measure of nuclear protection to all the Arab countries. There are two countries among the Arabs, i.e. Egypt and Iraq, who have a definite potential, though not active and immediate, to acquire and deploy a nuclear capability. After the Camp David agreement, much hope cannot be tied to Egypt, leaving Iraq whose OSIRAK reactor has been destroyed by Israelis and whose conventional strength has been dissipated in its war with Iran. However, after recuperating from the war, Iraq should be in a position to cause considerable anxiety to Israel. And if, due to a change in political style or leadership, Egypt comes back to the Arab fold, Israeli worries would be compounded. It is well known that Israel possesses nuclear weapons in the "last wire unconnected" form. It is hoped that she understands that a nuclear conflict would result in the total annihilation of Israel, but only severe losses to the Arab World.

The Case for the Bomb

STEPHEN P. COHEN *an American expert examines Pakistan's compulsions to go nuclear*

It was not until 1974 that the Pakistan military seriously addressed itself to the strategic implications of an Indian—and then a Pakistani—nuclear weapon. It was then asked by Bhutto to explore the military implications of nuclear proliferation in 1974, although evidence exists that plans for a nuclear programme began before that date. The army's analysis includes the following major points:

First it assumes Indian possession of several nuclear weapons or at least the capacity to "go nuclear" quickly (no published western report has verified this). Secondly, Pakistanis believe that such Indian weapons are directed primarily against them, not China. They ridicule the idea of Indians "catching up with the Chinese" or that there are any serious grounds for an India-China conflict. Thirdly, if Pakistan is the target, then the Indian bomb must have a military as well as a political rationale. They generally see it as enabling Indian conventional forces to seize the rest of Kashmir from Pakistan or even to dismember all of Pakistan, nuclear weapons held in reserve as a threat against Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and other vital targets would effectively paralyse Pakistan and make it unable to resist. Fourthly, such strategists conclude a modest, "limited" Pakistani weapons programme is essential to deter India's nuclear forces. Taking their lead from Indian writers on the subject, the Pakistanis have observed that the only time nuclear weapons have been actually used was when the enemy did not have them. Fifth, possession of nuclear weapons not only deterred a nuclear attack, but (referring to the NATO example) was an effective deterrent against conventional attack.

Some Pakistani and many Indian strategists argue that such a Pakistani bomb, besides neutralising an assumed Indian nuclear force, would provide the umbrella under which Pakistan could reopen the Kashmir issue. A Pakistani nuclear capability would paralyse not only the Indian nuclear decision, but also Indian conventional forces, and a bold Pakista-

ni strike to liberate Kashmir might go unchallenged if Indian leadership was indecisive. To a lesser extent such a nuclear force might enhance Pakistan's deterrent along the Durand Line. A major incursion into Pakistan could trigger a Pakistani nuclear response, directed against 'purely military' targets in Afghanistan or the Soviet Union. The weight of these arguments has led Pakistan to pursue the acquisition of fissile material through both the reprocessing and enrichment routes and perhaps other channels.

Those Pakistanis who have thought about nuclear proliferation generally believe that although the rapid spread of nuclear weapons is not necessarily in Pakistan's interests, it

Some Pakistani and many Indian strategists argue that such a Pakistani bomb would provide the umbrella under which Pakistan could reopen the Kashmir issue. A Pakistani nuclear capability would paralyse... Indian conventional forces...

does not threaten those interests, because the states most likely to confront Pakistan already either have nuclear weapons or are capable of acquiring them. Nor did the behaviour of Pakistan's allies do much to challenge the obvious implications of this analysis. China had long refused to transfer nuclear technology and subscribed to a doctrine of self-reliance in nuclear matters; the American government at first seemed to ignore the Indian explosion but then turned its fury upon both India and Pakistan for failing to sign the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It was in any case unwilling to provide conventional weapons to Pakistan in sufficient numbers to balance an Indian nuclear capacity (there is some question whether any

quantity of arms can—in the view of most Pakistani officers—balance a nuclear weapon in Indian hands).

Possession of the bomb will entangle both India and Pakistan in an endless series of calculations of "if I do this he will do that and I shall have to respond so why don't I move first?" But in the present state of bilateral nuclear options the same calculations are necessarily carried out and this has served to increase the pressure within the two governments to go ahead with military nuclear programmes as insurance against the other side. India's situation is complicated by the existence of a Chinese nuclear force, part of which could be targeted on India itself. The fact that a Pakistani nuclear weapon would probably lead to an Indian one is not in itself a sufficient barrier for Pakistani officers: they have not fully thought through the strategic balance of forces that would result from unlimited proliferation in South Asia but they do not think that it would be more disadvantageous than the present situation (in which they assume that India already has a covert nuclear capacity). If Indians find this conclusion to be in error, they must privately reassure the Pakistan government in whatever way that will be convincing.

To sum up there are extremely persuasive strategic reasons for Pakistan to go ahead with a military nuclear programme even if the political, diplomatic and economic cost is substantial. Assuming that Pakistan is going to acquire a nuclear weapon can we speculate on its strategic role? There has been some interesting discussion of this question in Pakistan recently, and a few remarks can be offered.

As in the case of India, Pakistani nuclear planners will have the choice of utilising their nuclear force for tactical or strategic ends. That is, nuclear devices can be used against massed troop concentrations or can be dropped on urban populations as sheer terror weapons. Given the nature of both economies there are also various targets that are of an ambivalent character. These would include major power production centres, dams, and irrigation projects, none of these would directly cause

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much loss of life—according to preliminary studies—and thus would not be “provocative” in the way that destruction of urban areas would be.

Such writing as does exist on the subject seems to indicate that Pakistani strategists favour the most dramatic (but realistically the most conservative) use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are “terror” weapons *par excellence*. There is no need to use them; mere possession is enough to ward off the threat; the Koran and modern deterrence theory neatly dovetail. Such a strategy would also simplify the command and control problem of Pakistan and would require the minimum number of weapons. Accuracy and timing not being crucial, it would also simplify targeting and delivery requirements. If proliferation does come to the subcontinent, it is possible that both India and Pakistan would adopt such deterrence-cum-terror strategies at first, and later, when a stockpile of fissionable material is developed, consider diverting some of this stockpile to produce a few “tactical” nuclear weapons. This could well happen if Pakistan felt that it was falling farther behind in its conventional arms imbalance with India, and that its stockpile of “strategic” weapons was not adequate to deter a conventional war.

All of this is grim, but Pakistanis are not necessarily irresponsible for engaging in such calculations. It is the melancholy duty of the professional soldier to think of such things. Nor is there much substance in the charge that Pakistan is somehow a candidate for “crazy” status—that it would irresponsibly detonate nuclear weapons or that it would transfer them to areas of the world where they would probably be used. The military of Pakistan have done self-destructive things in the past, and it cannot be assumed that they will not do them in the future. But I believe that the Pakistan Army has done much to rebuild its professional character; it is not likely that it will make such decisions in the future any more irresponsibly than any other state confronted with the same perplexing set of security constraints.

If a Pakistani bomb has some relevance to the threat of India, how relevant is it to Pakistan's new hot frontier with Afghanistan or to the turmoil of domestic politics? The same reasoning that applies to a hypothetical Indian attack upon Pakistan may be relevant to a hypothetical Soviet-Afghan attack. Pakistan would be no match for an all-out attack, nor would nuclear weapons be of much practical use,

but they might contribute something to the deterrent force at work, and they could also serve as a plausible substitute for several new divisions. Pakistan would not be threatening the Soviet Union itself, but only a neighbour acting with clear hostile intent. Given the vulnerability of Pakistan, such a threat might be as credible as an Israeli “Masada” bomb. But there is a rub.

If Pakistan were in such dire straits that it actually contemplated the use of a nuclear weapon against an attacking enemy, it might have already lost the military edge that would allow it to deliver such a weapon upon enemy targets. If confronted with the Soviet Air Force (or even the Indian Air Force), not to speak of a combination of the two, could a handful of PAF nuclear-capable aircraft survive an initial attack or penetrate fully alerted and hostile air-defence screens? Pakistan might well find its nuclear force both provocative and ineffective.

A Pakistani nuclear weapon would be greeted with widespread support

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at home (it is practically the only issue that Pakistanis do agree on), but there is some doubt that it will help any regime that does build, test, and deploy it. This is the “life-insurance” facet of nuclear weapons; as the Indians discovered a number of years ago—and as all other nuclear powers found out earlier—non-possession creates some unease and public anxiety, but possession barely returns the needle to normal.

Our analysis of Pakistan's nuclear program indicates that it is actuated by many motives. The most important of these are survival of regime and state, but other factors include considerations of national prestige, nuclear weapons as “bargaining chips” with friend and enemy alike, and the near-unanimous support for

the nuclear program among Pakistanis of all political persuasions. If any outside state wishes to influence the Pakistan decision eventually to “go nuclear,” it must understand that proliferation in South Asia is a complex affair. It is not an event as much as a process; the process does not end with a test detonation, let alone the acquisition of special nuclear material. Nor is more necessarily less; at certain force levels—should the region become nuclearised—relations between south Asian states and between the region and external powers may become more rather than less stable.

To deal effectively with the proliferation process of south Asia, and to enable the states of South Asia to deal with more basic threats to their security, such as slow rates of economic development, the unequal distribution of wealth, and political disorder, more is required than quick fixes. The best strategy for dealing with nuclear proliferation may not be the best possible strategy if it triggers a conventional war.

The irony is that the “best strategy” devised by nonregional states (especially the United States) to deal with the proliferation problem may also have increased rather than decreased the rate of proliferation. An effective antiproliferation strategy for South Asia would have to identify the minimum-security requirements of both India and Pakistan.

The most effective approach would be one that assists regional states in isolating South Asia (or what remains of it, after the Soviet Union has finished its task in Afghanistan) from superpower conflict and simultaneously settles major regional disputes. If these can be dealt with at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield, much of the concern about the “threat” of Pakistan to India, of India to Pakistan, and of China to India will be dissipated. The states involved can move towards their own version of a regional peace agreement and devote their resources to their only permanent enemy: domestic disorder, poverty, and low growth rates. Pakistani arms can be left at a level sufficient to deter the unlikely straight-on Soviet or Indian attack but not so large that it would enable Pakistan to carry out a successful attack on India. There is an upper limit of arms which Pakistan need not cross, for to do so would be threatening to India; but there is an important lower limit. Below this mix of numbers, quality, and tactical disposition Pakistan cannot fall; India and Pakistan must jointly determine these upper and lower limits.

GUJARAT

Solanki's Fight for Survival

While communal clashes continue

The report by the five member committee comprising Congress(I) general secretary G.K. Moopannar, P. Shiv Shankar, former MP Santosh Mohan Dev, UP chief minister N.D. Tewari, and Rajasthan chief minister Harideo Joshi has asked Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi not to take any hasty decision regarding a change of leadership in the state. Though this is likely to give chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki a fresh lease of life, the solution to the Gujarat problem is nowhere in sight: the anti-reservation movement has not died down and communal clashes continue with the most recent major incident taking place on 20 June, the day of *rath yatra* (chariot procession).

On that day as over 1,000 policemen stared in disbelief, an elephant belonging to the Jagdeesh temple in the Jamalpur area of Ahmedabad pushed aside a police van blocking the entrance to the temple and flouting curfew orders, devotees rushed out to begin the procession. The ceremonial *rath yatra* wound its way through riot-torn areas like Dariyapur. By the end of the day, seven people were dead, six of them in the army firing and 11 others injured, taking the death toll in the past four months to 175.

It was, perhaps, surprising that the death toll at the end of the day was not higher. The next day, hundreds of Muslim women in Dariyapur and Kalupur, defying curfew orders, took

to the streets to demonstrate against the army. Some women even knelt down on the streets to offer prayers as the jawans tried to persuade them to go back to their houses. This showed once again, the worsening communal situation in Ahmedabad and the severe limitations even for the army in case the authorities insist on the prolonged use of troops to maintain peace.

Efforts by the government to persuade the temple authorities to abandon their programme failed. For about 100 years now, the ceremonial *yatra* has begun in front of the temple and made its way through the densely populated walled city areas in Ashadh Sud Dooj. The mammoth procession always started at seven am with the idols of Jagannath, Balbhadra and Subhadra in separate chariots.

This year, the government was worried about communal trouble breaking out in the city as the *rath yatra* festival coincided with Id. Government officials, including chief secretary Sivagnanam met the temple's head priest Mahant Ramharshdasji requesting him not to bring out a procession. As home minister Amarsinh Choudhary later claimed, the Mahant agreed to cancel the procession. Instead, the deities would be brought from the Jagdeesh temple to the Vaishnav temple in Saharapur for the ceremonial *puja*. Dr Amubhai Shukla, a member of the advisory board in charge of the trust, dis-

agreed. He claimed that a few days earlier, the police commissioner B.K. Jha had pleaded with the Mahant not to bring out a procession saying that he would have to resign if there was trouble. Shukla said that the Mahant had initially agreed but changed his mind later. This created such confusion even on the morning of 20 June that some newspapers said that the *yatra* would not be held.

The devotees had apparently pressurised the temple authorities. A religious leader and founder president of Jai Ram Rajya Paksha, Shambhu Maharaj (who was detained on 19 June) announced that if the temple did not organise the *yatra*, he would do so by carrying photographs of the deities on the hood of a car. Many others were angry that a century old tradition was being broken.

On the evening of 19 June, the police even announced traffic arrangements for devotees who were to approach the temple on foot from various directions in Jamalpur. This meant that though the *yatra* would not take place, the people would have easy access to the temple for *pujas* and *darshan* throughout the next day. In the small hours of 20 June, more than 1,000 policemen were deployed near the temple. Vehicular traffic near the temple was banned and the area cordoned off. A police van was parked in front of the outer gate of the temple compound so that only pedestrians could pass. At six am *aarti* was performed and the three deities placed on their chariots. Outside, policemen waited tensely as thousands of devotees rented the air with cries of *Jai Jagdeesh Hare*.

What followed was pure drama. The *sadhus* released about 300 cows, with vermilion marks on their foreheads, from the temple stalls and then an elephant. On instructions from its *mahout*, the elephant, marched ahead and pushed the police van away. The chariot carrying Lord Jagannath was hastily brought forward by the devotees and though police officials managed to park another van in front of the gate to prevent the two other chariots from coming out, another elephant inside the temple pushed it away.

The events left the police force nonplussed. The home minister said later that the police deliberately did not use force as the elephants and cows present would have caused a stampede. The three chariots were then pulled towards the fire station where the road had been blocked. The road-block too was removed by the devotees and the procession moved towards the walled city. In-



The *rath-yatra* procession in Ahmedabad on 20 June

initially, the procession, did not enter the walled city through the Jamalpur gate but took another route. Just when the authorities were hoping that the route through the walled areas would be avoided, the procession entered the walled city through the Raipur gate. The procession passed quite peacefully through predominantly Hindu areas of Raipur and Khadia, where riots had taken place in March, and Panchkuva, where a large number of Muslims live. At around 2.30 pm, it reached Saraspur and then made for the Kalupur railway bridge. The author

ities had made frantic efforts to ensure that the yatra did not take this route (via Dariyapur). The processionists had agreed, but after crossing the railway bridge, suddenly turned towards Dariyapur through the Prem Darwaja.

What happened immediately after is not clear because of the confusion and panic. After the chariots had passed through the Prem Darwaja and was moving towards Jordan Road, stone throwing began. The efforts of the army contingent, headed by Brig S C Katoch, to persuade the people not to take the

Dariyapur route failed. Some people even dared the security forces to open fire on them. Though the army had lined up along the route to ensure that no violence erupted, brickbats a few hundred yards from Prem Darwaja led to clashes. The army opened fire at three places, killing six persons and wounding 11. Three others were hurt when a bomb went off in Shahpur. Fortunately, there were no clashes after the incidents in Dariyapur and Shahpur and the procession reached the temple that evening.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

ASSAM NAGALAND BORDER

Was the Clash Planned?

Controversy over alleged statement by Nagaland minister

Did the Nagaland council of ministers decide on 4 June to wage war against Assam? The day when the clash between the police of the two states broke out at Merapani, the Nagaland chief minister S C Jamir told the state Assembly on 24 June that at no point of time did his council of ministers ever decide to fight a border war with Assam. Mr Jamir's denial came after an allegation by Mr Sentichuba of the Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP) who insisted that the state's forest minister Kariba Ao had said in a public meeting at Mokokchung on 5 June that the Nagaland cabinet decided the day before the Merapani incident to conduct operations against Assam. Replying to Mr Sentichuba, Mr Jamir said it was unthinkable that a state should decide to fight a sister state and urged opposition members to be more responsible while making allegations against the government.

Mr Kariba who was present in the house also denied having made a statement but Mr Sentichuba still insisted that such a statement had been made in the public meeting at Mokokchung. Even after Mr Kariba's denial, the leader of the opposition, Mr Vamuzo stated that after Mr Kariba's highly provocative statement, he had received two phone calls from Kohima informing him about the speech. Mr Sentichuba admitted that he understood that the state cabinet could never take such a decision but he wanted to know why Mr Kariba made such statements on 25 June when the no confidence motion against the Jamir government came up for discussion. An



S C Jamir

NNDP member Mr Vejoi Vergo, congratulated Mr Kariba for having publicly declared war on Assam. Another NNDP member Mr Thinucho suggested that Mr Kariba should henceforth be known as the war monger minister. Mr Kariba was present during the furore and was seen smiling whenever his name came up.

If the NNDP members tried to extract political mileage out of the Merapani incident, the chief minister also whipped up local sentiments. Some of Mr Jamir's statements were so provocative that it seemed that he was challenging the Congress(I) high command which had directed chief ministers of both Assam and Nagaland not to make explosive statements on the Merapani issue. At one

point, Mr Jamir referring to the heavy casualties on the Assam side during the clash said, "We have taught them (the Assamese) a lesson" and went on to add that "if Assam behaved like that again we will not hesitate to do so even in the future." The chief minister made it absolutely clear that the Sundaram Committee recommendations were not acceptable to Nagaland. Mr Jamir said as far as his government is concerned the Sundaram Report is in cold storage. "We have got nothing to do with it and we will never entertain it," Mr Jamir said. He told the House that the Central Reserve Police Force personnel sided with the Assam police. Mr Jamir also congratulated the Nagaland police for their bravery and valour against the Assam police personnel who he said, had run away. Mr Jamir denied that two BSF units had taken part in the clash along with the Nagaland police.

According to intelligence sources in Kohima, the Nagaland police were supported by some underground members belonging to the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). The sources base their claim on the fact that some Chinese weapons were used by the Nagaland forces which they could not have procured on their own. Although Mr Jamir repeatedly described Assam as the "aggressor" in the clash, no mention was made by him of a report that at least 1,000 village guards armed with daos had reached Merapani from Tuensang to fight the Assam police. The village guards, strangely, were met at Tuensang by the deputy commissioner R S Pandey who told them to return victorious from Merapani. Mr Pongom of the NNDP lamented in the House that the Tuensang village guards had been used in the clash while those from the developed districts "relaxed" at home.

Arvind Kumar, Kohima

PUNJAB

The Bhindranwale of the Hindus

Militant Hindus plan to fight Sikh extremists

"Jagdish Tangri is my inspiration. He is the only sincere leader of the Hindus in Punjab today," said Pooja Sood, a young Hindu girl from Hoshiarpur, a small town about 120 kms from Amritsar. At 21, she is the district unit president of the Hindu Shiv Sena. Last year, she had completed her post graduation in English literature. Today, she is under the spell of a man called Jagdish Tangri, who is trying to become the Bhindranwale of the Hindus in Punjab.

Pooja Sood has decided to dedicate herself completely to the cause of the Hindu Shiv Sena headed by Jagdish Tangri. She

spoke at length to SUNDAY about Tangri, his aims and objectives at Hoshiarpur's Shakti temple, the present headquarters of the Hindu organisation—with a 100-odd Shiv Sena volunteers, mostly Hindu youths, surrounding her. Also, in attendance were a number of young Hindu government employees. Although she did not sound mature, she seemed profoundly motivated.

But Pooja, too, has the makings of a fanatic. The manner in which she traced the birth of the Hindu Shiv Sena in Punjab smacked of extremism. "For how long could the Hindus have suffered like that? The government did nothing for three years

when Bhindranwale was ordering the killings of innocent Hindus, sitting in the Golden Temple. During that period, he ruled Punjab." Then, after a pause she said, "During the days Bhindranwale ruled the roost, Jagdish Tangri was the only person who raised his voice against the man." Pooja had met Jagdish Tangri in Hoshiarpur, after Sikh extremists murdered the prominent Lok Dal leader and president of the state unit of the party, Chaudhary Balbir Singh, near his farm on the outskirts of the city on 10 May. Singh was a Hindu and had many Sikh relatives. He was on the hit list of the Sikh extremists. At the time of writing, the town was still under a curfew which was in force since 10 May, immediately after the murder of the veteran leader, following which rioting broke out. More than 50 Sikh shops in different parts of the town were set on fire by agitated Hindus. Soon Jagdish Tangri appeared on the scene and the situation in Hoshiarpur worsened in the next few days. A top Punjab government officer said, "This fellow Tangri is the villain of the tragedy in Hoshiarpur. He is fully responsible for the apparent Hindu Sikh divide in this town. He incited the Hindus and the Balmikis against the Sikhs." After the murder of the Lok Dal leader, Tangri camped in Hoshiarpur. And to remain in the limelight, he also began an indefinite fast, demanding the release of his right-hand man Sunil Dutt Walia, a local Hindu, and other Shiv Sena volunteers arrested in connection with the incidents of arson and loot on 10 May.

Bhindranwale, too, had begun his *morcha* (agitation) on 19 July 1982, from the Golden Temple in a similar fashion. He had demanded the release of Bhai Amrik Singh, the president of the All India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF) and Thara Singh, manager of Gurudwara Gurudarshan Parkash at Mehta Chowk, the headquarters of the famous Damdami Sahib Taksal. They were both killed during the June army action in the Golden Temple after they were arrested by the Amritsar police.

On 6 June, the Punjab government gave in to the pressure and instructed the district administration to release Walia, who had allegedly stabbed a Sikh youth, Gurmeh Singh, killing him. The release of Walia on parole angered the local Sikhs who are in a small minority in the town. There are 75 per cent Hindus and 25 per cent Sikhs in Hoshiarpur. After ending his fast, Tangri left for Ludhiana, his hometown. Meanwhile, violent clashes broke out again between Hindus and Sikhs on 6

POLITICS

War of Words

After a long time there was an exchange of fire between the opposition and the Congress(I) high command. Shrikant Varma, AICC (I) general secretary and the chief spokesman for the party is usually quick to pounce upon statements made by opposition leaders and comment on them. In the last few months though, he had not been afforded many opportunities to do so. The opposition leaders, it seemed, had shut shop and sat back, finding practically nothing to do with themselves.

The Lok Dal leaders were perhaps the only ones who kept themselves in the news, issuing statements from time to time. A Delhi-based magazine had, in fact, sent to press an article interpreting the BJP president, Atal Behari Vajpayee's silence as an indication of his desire to step down from the leadership of the party.

But on 25 June—the eve of the tenth anniversary of the declaration of the Emergency—Vajpayee called a press conference to say that even today, manifestations of the Emergency remain though the Emergency may not officially be in force. He pointed out several factors which had contributed to the Emergency ethos and which still persist. The building up of a personality cult and the emergence of a caucus around the Prime Minister reminded

one of the pre-Emergency days, he alleged. But the most serious charge that Vajpayee levelled was that the telephones of important persons including those of President Giani Zail Singh and the outgoing Chief Justice, Y.V. Chandrachud, were being tapped by the intelligence bureau. He also demanded an enquiry into the affair and the working of the intelligence bureau. Asked whether he had any proof to back his allegation, Vajpayee said that if an enquiry were to be held, he would produce "documentary evidence."

Shrikant Varma was fuming in the AICC(I) office at 24, Akbar Road, raring to have a go at Vajpayee. Varma, who is also a Hindi poet, laces his comments with all manner of similes and metaphors; specially when he is speaking about an important personality like Atal Behari Vajpayee. He began his routine briefing by saying that Vajpayee had "embarked on a voyage of lies" adding that the BJP president was making "wild allegations" because he was frustrated. Varma further said that it took Vajpayee 30 years to become a national leader while Rajiv Gandhi became an international leader in just eight months. According to him his party is today "more democratic than ever before."

Sanjiv Thakur, New Delhi

June in Hoshiarpur. The local Harijans, too, clashed first with the Sikhs and later with the police, who opened fire in the Balmiki mohalla. The Shiv Sena had instigated the attack on the Balmikis. While Hoshiarpur was burning, Tangri, the man who had sparked off the violence, got himself admitted to Ludhiana's Dayanand Hospital.

Today the Shiv Sena president is in jail. He was arrested under the National Security Act (NSA) from the Dayanand Hospital only on the night of 10 June. The Hindu Shiv Sena gave a call for a Punjab *bandh* on 12 June in protest against the detention of their leader. The response to the call was no doubt lukewarm. But Tangri began to emerge as a leader of the Hindus in Punjab.

Who is Tangri? What is his background? How did he suddenly become popular? What are his aims and objectives? These are important questions in the context of the rise of Hindu militancy in the troubled state. Tangri (54), hails from the business community of Ludhiana, the industrial centre of Punjab. He owns a small gas cylinder shop in the Gurmandi area of Ludhiana's famous Chora Bazar.

Describing his background, Virender Pramod, a Ludhiana journalist, said: "Tangri has his roots in the Jana Sangh. But now there are men from both the BJP and the ruling party in his Shiv Sena." Asked about the extent of his influence, Pramod observed: "He is becoming popular among the Hindus. The Hindus feel that at least there is someone now to promote their cause." According to official sources, Tangri's party today has nearly 200 hardcore Hindu youths. The Gurmandi area in Ludhiana is the main centre for the Shiv Sena's activities. Highly placed police sources disclosed that the Shiv Sena boys have also started collecting arms clandestinely. A veteran Ludhiana journalist who prefers to remain unnamed, also confirmed that Tangri is encouraging his Shiv Sena to collect arms.

The Hindu Shiv Sena was formed by Tangri in Punjab in 1981. According to Shyam Kumar Kohli, adviser to the body, "We formed our organisation immediately after the beginning of the Sikh extremism led by Bhindranwale." Explaining the aims of the Shiv Sena, Kohli, a Ludhiana businessman, said: "We don't want to see India divided. The Sikh extremists who are being backed by the external forces want to break this

country. The Shiv Sena has given a fitting reply to Sikh extremism in Punjab. Jagdish Tangri is the only Hindu leader in Punjab who took up cudgels against Bhindranwale." Kohli proudly disclosed: "Ours was the only organisation which burned the effigy of Bhindranwale in Ludhiana at a time when he was the most dreaded man in Punjab."

The Hindu Shiv Sena which is not affiliated to Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena in Bombay is a completely independent organisation. According to Kohli, it has launched a campaign to distribute *trishuls* among the Hindus in the state as a first step to fighting Sikh extremism. He claimed that over 5,000 Hindus have already become members of the organisation. Kohli also stressed that "our fight is not against the Sikhs. A Sikh can't be an extremist. Our fight is against the extremists who have played havoc in Punjab during the last three years.

But Jathedar Ranjit Singh Naaz, a prominent Akali leader of Ludhiana was emphatic in accusing Tangri of inciting both Hindus and Balmikis against the Sikhs in Punjab. However, the Akali leader did not consider Tangri a force to reckon with. Commented Naaz: "Tangri is an ambitious man. He has just cashed in on the situation by arousing Hindu feelings in Punjab. Basically, he wants to

collect money, which he has succeeded in doing during the last one month or so. He wants to contest the next election." In political circles there is a strong feeling that the ruling party is backing the Shiv Sena leader. Shyam Sunder Bhatia, a RSS activist and a leading Amritsar industrialist, alleged: "Tangri has the support of the Congress(I)."

Tangri is a controversial man in Punjab today. But he seems to have captured the imagination of the Hindu lumpens. All these illiterate and semi-literate Hindu boys can be seen holding *trishuls* in the Shakti temple of Hoshiarpur and Gurmandi in Ludhiana. They have no goals in life. But they will not miss an opportunity to indulge in arson and loot when the chance comes. But the real tragedy is that Tangri is being lauded by prominent Hindus in Punjab, many of them educated people.

The Hindu Shiv Sena leader is certainly not a well-known figure in Punjab today. But he is showing signs of emerging as Bhindranwale's Hindu counterpart. A Ludhiana journalist aptly described the new Hindu Shiv Sena leader: "Like Bhindranwale, he is also fiery and communal. He may not be a Bhindranwale today but he is following the same line."

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

BLACK MONEY

The Growing Menace

The union government to plan remedial measures

It confirmed the worst suspicions. For years, economists had been making rough estimates, but the first ever report on black money in India released by the government on 24

June confirmed that the total black money generated in the country amounted to almost a fifth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The 601 page report titled 'Aspects of the Black Economy in India, prepared by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, was submitted to the government in March. According to its estimate, the amount of black money in the country was between Rs 31,584 crores and Rs 36,786 crores in 1983-84 which is 18 to 21 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. The report also estimates the amount of black money in the economy in the years 1975-76 and 1980-81. In both the years, the estimates range between 15 to 18 per cent.

Treating the black money problem from all angles, the report has other gloomy disclosures to make. According to its estimation, the tax evaded income was between 69.95 per cent



V.P. Singh

Rajesh Kumar

and 73.51 per cent of the income that should have been taxed for 1975-76. For 1980-81, the tax evaded income was three-fourths of the total taxable income at between 74.21 per cent and 76.99 per cent. These incomes, the report clarifies, do not include incomes generated by activities like smuggling. The estimates of tax evaded income have in fact been derived by comparing the actual payment of tax during the year with an estimate of the tax that should have been paid according to the income distribution worked out independent of tax receipts.

The union finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh disagreed vehemently. While releasing the report, he said he did not believe that increases in government spending had anything to do with black money, and clarified that the finance ministry did not subscribe to this finding of the study. Moreover he said, with the recent decision of the government to permit private companies to donate to political parties, the question of black money funding political parties did not arise.

The report identified key areas like estate, film industry, construction, large scale manufacturing, and smuggling where black money is generated. According to its assessment, complete or partial suppression

of total receipts, exaggeration of expenses and under valuation of assets continue to be the common methods of black money generation.

Black money is spent mainly on consumption, says the report, except in the case of businessmen who reinvest it to generate more black money. It was found that black income was converted into real estate holdings, undisclosed or under valued stock in trade, ornaments, precious stones and *benami* financial transactions. A novel method of laundering black money is to exchange it against foreign exchange remittances in the form of gifts.

The report also discusses the possible ways to bring black money into the mainstream of development activity. Among its proposals is a suggestion to initiate a "national fund" for slum clearance or similar social objectives with an initial capital of about Rs. 100 crores. Debentures could then be floated with a maturity period of ten years with an eight per cent rate of interest. No questions should be asked about the source of funds invested in these debentures, the reports advise. The value of these debentures and interest on it would be liable to income and wealth tax but not to gift tax. Asked if this was just a variation of

the bearer bonds scheme, the finance minister replied that the debentures would not be transferrable like the bearer bonds. He pointed out that the government was still examining these proposals and only after a detailed scrutiny would they be accepted or rejected.

There has also been a proposal to devalue the Rupee, which the finance minister has ruled out. "We have no intention to devalue the Rupee," V.P. Singh asserted. Other drastic measures like easing of exchange controls were also ruled out by the finance minister. But suggestions to be "considered in due course" included reducing customs and excise duties to prevent smuggling, reducing physical controls and introducing dual pricing in more areas. The minister pointed out that steps had already been taken in this direction.

One of the significant suggestions in the report is that "black wealth" in real estate, bank deposits, company deposits, shares and debentures of Indian companies held as on 31 March of the previous year and declared to the income tax authorities should be taxed at 50 per cent of the estimated income. Wealth declared under the scheme would be liable to wealth tax from the year of declaration. Once again, the minister said the government would have to examine the proposal.

Mr Singh also hinted that the government was thinking about the remedial measures suggested in the report, like discouraging tax evasion and measures for better enforcement of taxes. To tighten the existing loopholes and bring more errands to book, the minister indicated that the government was thinking of either eliminating or considerably diluting the doctrine of *Mens Rea*. This would make prosecution of offenders more effective he said pointing out that judicial intervention was one of the major obstacles in the process. The doctrine of *Mens Rea* dictates that the prosecuting authority has to prove before a court of law that the accused has violated tax laws with the intention of tax evasion. The government is now thinking of shifting the onus of proof to the assessee.

An interesting suggestion by the study is that there be a "floor level" state funding of election expenses of candidates both for the Lok Sabha as well as for Vidhan Sabha elections. Asked for his views on this proposal, V.P. Singh refused to comment. "But it would be examined by the government," he said.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

Bombay: The Submerged City



On 25 June life in Bombay, for the second time in the month, came to a grinding halt. The heavy rains took their toll: house collapses left 24 persons dead and 15 others injured. For over 24 hours, the city remained under water leaving people to wade through neck-deep water in some areas. Photograph by Rashid D. Bamanbehram

MADHYA PRADESH

A Return to the Fold?

S. C. Shukla attempts a comeback to the Congress(I)

Shyama Charan Shukla, a former Chief minister of Madhya Pradesh and the brother of former union minister V.C. Shukla has been trying to return to the centre-stage of Madhya Pradesh politics. And in order to consolidate his position, his first move has been to try and engineer a comeback into the Congress(I).

When he tried to merge the entire state unit of the Congress(S) with the Congress(I) after his party's big debacle in Madhya Pradesh in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections, there have been reports about his entry into the Congress(I). Shukla was a member of the central executive of the Congress(S)

and he had felt that the office-bearers of the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh unit of the Congress(S) would be accepted as office-bearers in the Congress(I) in their respective capacities. Indira Gandhi, however, did not agree, because of which, Shukla continues to be in the cold. But he is still hopeful and is trying to persuade the high command to the take him back. In 1984, Mr Ram Gopal Tiwari, the then chief of the Madhya Pradesh PCC(I) had declared that he had spoken to the Prime Minister about the entry of Mr Shukla to the Congress(I) and even said that the announcement would be made soon. Unfortunately for

him, Mrs Gandhi removed Tiwari from the PCC(I), and Motilal Vora, now the present chief minister replaced him. Tiwari, who has publicly advocated Shukla's entry into the Congress(I) is no longer a major force in the state.

Mr Shukla has some influential supporters like Kamalapati Tripathi and the AICC(I) general secretary Mrs Rajendra Kumari Bajpayee, who is related to him. Still, efforts were more by certain leaders to invite S.C. Shukla to a number of political conferences in Madhya Pradesh last year where Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi were the chief guests. According to Shukla's supporters, it was Arjun Singh, the former chief minister of the state, who prevented his entry into the party. They claim that Arjun Singh convinced the Congress(I) high command that Shukla's return would create instability in the state unit of the party.

With Motilal Vora taking over as CM, Shukla has reason to feel opti-

WEST BENGAL

Left Front Wins Corporation Elections

The Left Front, since it came to power in West Bengal in 1977, has been steadily losing ground to the opposition Congress(I). Over the years the urban support for the Congress(I) had been growing. While in the 1982 Assembly elections Calcutta city's voters were evenly divided between the Left Front and the Congress(I) there was a dramatic shift in their preferences during the December Lok Sabha elections when Congress(I) candidates polled more votes than their Left Front rivals in 114 of 141 municipal wards of Calcutta. The stakes for both the Left Front and the Congress(I) were, therefore, very high at the city civic polls held on 30 June after 16 years.

In the last civic polls held in 1969 the CPI(M)-led Left Front won the majority but the Congress(I) on returning to power in West Bengal in 1972, dismissed the elected civic body before it could complete its five-year term. Since then government-appointed administrators had been running the Corporation.

Surprising pollsters and political observers alike, the Left Front turned the tables on the Congress(I) in a see-saw battle for the control of Calcutta Corporation. In a close race the Left Front won 71 of 141 seats while the Congress(I) won 67 seats. Two of the remaining seats went to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and

one to an independent candidate. The verdict came as a desperately needed shot-in-the-arm for the Left Front and none too soon.

While the Left Front's success is in many ways a personal triumph for chief minister Jyoti Basu who almost singlehandedly managed the Front's campaign, the Congress(I)'s dismal performance is a manifestation of bitter infighting. To grab the credit for an anticipated poll victory prominent state leaders of the Congress(I) fought bitterly among themselves and at least three distinctly identifiable factions led by former finance minister and recently appointed West Bengal Congress(I) chief Pranab Mukherjee, former railway minister A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury and union law minister Ashoke Sen emerged before the polls. To make matters worse Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi agreed to let West Bengal's former chief minister, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, campaign for the Congress(I) much against the wishes of the state party leaders.

The Congress(I) lost many seats because of the party dissidents, propped up by one or the other faction leaders as independent candidates cut into its votes. The civic poll results also indicate that much of the pro-Congress(I) wave that was evident during the December Lok

Sabha elections has receded. While voters still favoured Congress(I) in the core of the city it is the fringe areas, recently brought under the city corporation, which really clinched the issue in favour of the Left Front. Also, there may have been some erosion in the Congress(I) popularity because Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi referred to Calcutta as a 'dying city'.

Poor polling due to inclement weather and indifference of the voters also contributed to the Congress(I)'s defeat as did the exclusion of some 600,000 voters, including the law minister Ashoke Sen who had voted in the Lok Sabha elections, from the list of eligible voters for the civic polls.

Although the Left Front will take charge of the city corporation with a paper thin majority it is expected to enhance its strength after administrators are elected to the civic body. In an indirect election city councillors will choose seven aldermen for the Corporation and going by the strength of the respective parties the Left Front is certain to get four of its candidates elected, one of whom is to be the mayor of Calcutta Corporation. That would ensure the Left Front a fairly stable majority.

A Special Correspondent, Calcutta

mistic. It is believed that Vora will eventually require Shukla's support to cope with the Thakur lobby of the Congress(I) which claims allegiance to Arjun Singh. Meanwhile, in an informal meeting with local journalists, Shukla claimed that several irrigation and other development projects he had launched in the Chhatisgarh area during his chief ministership between 1975 and 1977 were discontinued when Arjun Singh took over, which led to a loss of several crores of rupees. Shukla also said that he had met Rajiv Gandhi

twice in recent times and claimed to have very good relations with him.

But Shukla's reentry into the Congress(I), despite Arjun Singh's absence will not be easy. It is believed that Jivan Lal Sao, a former parliamentary secretary who lost the Legislature Assembly seat from Rajini in Raipur district on a Congress(I) ticket has complained to the state PCC(I) and the Prime Minister that Shukla had helped his rival, the BJP candidate Punit Ram Sahu in the Assembly elections this year.

Speculations have already begun

in the state about what Shukla would do if Kamalapati Tripathi and Mrs. Bajpayee succeeded in bringing him back. Political observers believe that his entry into the Congress(I) would give him another opportunity to become the chief minister. The present chief minister Motilal Vora, however, remained non-committal. He told SUNDAY that Shukla's entry into the Congress(I) was a matter to be decided by the high command and any comment on the question was beyond his jurisdiction.

M.V. Kher, Raipur

BANGALORE

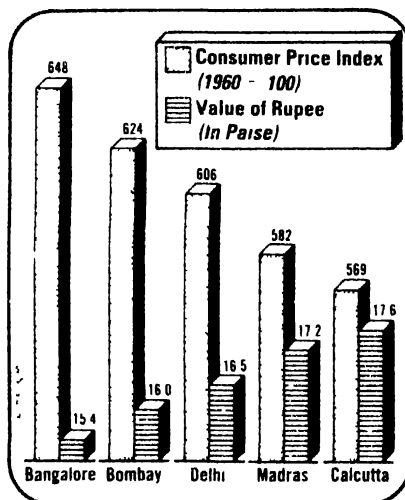
Growing Pains

It is the costliest city in the country

For some years now, Bangalore has become the fastest growing city in the country. But recently, it was revealed that Bangalore is also the costliest city in India. According to the statistics computed at the Labour Bureau in Shimla, the Indian rupee is worth only 15.43 paise in Bangalore. This is the lowest among the 10 Indian cities with a population of over a million. Bangalore also has the highest consumer price index—648 points—among the ten big cities, indicating a higher cost of living than any other city.

The news is hardly surprising considering that Bangalore is the fastest growing city in the country. Its annual growth rate is an astonishing 7.6 per cent, probably only second to Mexico City's eight per cent. Most people believe the city's high growth rate to be the prime reason for the high cost of living. Says S.R. Bommai, senior minister in the Ramakrishna Hegde cabinet who has been in charge of the finance and revenue portfolios: "There is simply no doubt that it is the tremendous population explosion, mainly due to migration into the city, that is responsible for this debacle." This view is corroborated by the noted economist and former education minister, V. K. R. V. Rao who feels that the inflow of money, both black and white, being brought in by the immigrants is the prime reason for the high cost of living in the city.

During the last decade, Bangalore has undergone a major demographic change. Between 1971-81, the city's population increased by 76.2 per cent, double that of the previous decade (37.82 per cent). The growth was the highest among Indian cities, a clear 20 per cent more than Delhi.



In actual terms, Bangalore's population increased from 1.6 million to 2.9 million in just a decade. From being the seventh largest city in 1971, it rose to the fifth position by 1981. The city's population is likely to go up to six million by 2001 AD.

The spurt in population coincided with the increase in industrialisation when the late Devraj Urs was CM. By the late Seventies, Bangalore had more than 30 per cent of the state's industries and nearly 50 per cent of the industrial workers. Industrial units sprang up in Hosur on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, a bare 40 kms from Bangalore. Areas for industrial development were also earmarked all around Bangalore city. Among the first to take advantage of this liberal industrial policy were the enterprising immigrants from Bombay and Gujarat. It stimulated trade and investments flowed into Bangalore. By the early Eighties, the sales

tax collection in Bangalore city amounted to nearly 60 per cent of the total collection in the state.

This industrial, fiscal and demographic boom has not kept parity with the growth of the city's infrastructure. This is easily manifest in the housing problem. Though there has been a considerable increase in housing, it has in no way matched the growth of population. The Bangalore Development Authority has functioned tardily and its distribution of sites is abysmally low. The problem has been aggravated by the population influx with rich immigrants willing to pay very high rents. In the late Seventies, house rents in Bangalore shot up, as thousands of Iranian students, who swarmed the city, were willing to pay up to Rs 1000 for a single room. The population boom has put tremendous pressure on the city's civic amenities and the per unit cost of basic needs like water, power and transport has increased faster than in any other city. After the Janata government came to power, it increased the power and transport rates more than once and this has also led to the high cost of living.

'Inadequate' is the word one hears frequently. From power to transport, everything is inadequate. Karnataka was a power surplus state in the early Seventies when the boom first began, but now it faces power shortages. The Bangalore Transport Corporation operates only about 1000 buses, when it needs about twice the number. This has led to a 231 per cent increase in the number of private vehicles in the decade between 1971 and 1981. At present, Bangalore has more two-wheelers than there are in the whole of Tamil Nadu.

The water crisis in the city is so acute that the water board does not hesitate to take desperate measures like inviting a *yogi* to pray for rain. The city is supplied with 345 million litres of water a day which is only one-third of its needs. Of this, nearly 40 per cent is consumed by industries and as a result, domestic consump-

tion is just 70 litres per capita per day as against the prescribed 200 litres. At the present rate of growth, it is expected to plunge to 41 litres a day by 2001 AD. To supply more water, the government is spending Rs 240 crores on the Cauvery Scheme to supply water to the citizens of Bangalore from Cauvery river which is 100 kms away. As this is a part of non-plan expenditure, the people of Bangalore will have to pay heavy taxes.

A report of the Study Group on the Strategy of Urban Development set

up by the ministry of works and housing, government of India, says: "Today, much more than Calcutta, it is Bangalore which should make us sit up and think over the problems brought about by reckless and uncontrolled migration and urbanisation... a process which is marked by massive inflow of capital as well as labour into the region, contributing to benefits accruing mainly to the new migrants while imposing severe strains on the old resident population..."

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

SUGAR INDUSTRY

A Bitter Pill

India, a former exporter, now imports sugar

For the consumer already reeling under an accelerated cost of living, the news that sugar prices may rise to about Rs ten a kg is not heartening. In a country that is reputed to have the largest area under cane cultivation in the world, the government has been forced to import sugar to prevent a scarcity in the market. It is not surprising that the industry has put the blame squarely on the government.

In a spate of highly publicised advertisements in major dailies and magazines, the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) described the state of the Indian sugar industry

graphically—"...conversion of India from an exporter of sugar to an importer, staggering losses to the tune of Rs 800 crores, an annual price subsidy of Rs 300 to the consumer and now, a possibility of a scarcity due to the faulty implementation of the government's distribution network."

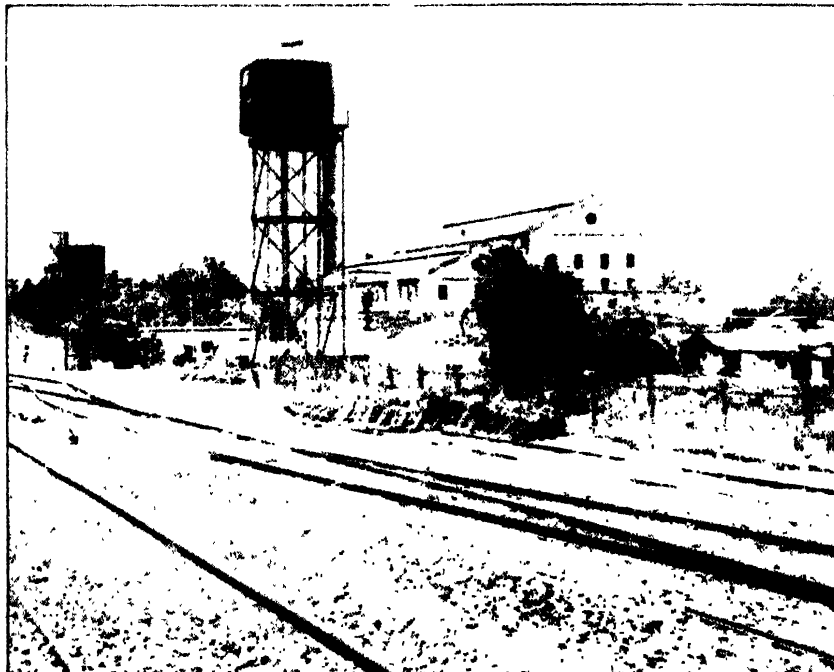
With production in the current sugar season (October 1984 to May 1985) pegged at 62 lakh tonnes and consumption at 74.42 lakh tonnes, the prospect of a shortage is indeed great especially in the free sale market. With the government's policy of partial decontrol over the industry,

65 per cent of the total stock is sold as levy sugar which is distributed through ration shops, while the remaining 35 per cent is available in the open market. However, even this 35 per cent is subject to government control in the form of periodic releases sanctioned by the ministry of food and civil supplies.

Given the production estimate of 62 lakh tonnes for the 1984-1985 season, the 35 per cent of the available sugar works out to 21.70 lakh tonnes. With the opening stock of 10 lakh tonnes and the three lakh tonnes available to new units for free sale, the total amount of free sugar available is 34.70 lakh tonnes. Out of this however, the government has already released 30.85 lakh tonnes of free sugar leaving 3.85 lakh tonnes available for the remaining four months for the period June-September 1985. During this period there will be a shortage of about 10 lakh tonnes.

The main cause of this discrepancy between availability and requirement has been the indiscriminate releases by the government, especially during the period before the elections. Extra sugar has always been released during the festive months from September to November but last year the releases were substantially higher as compared to the year before. The free sale sugar made available to the market for December 1984 was 4.35 lakh tonnes, a 45 per cent increase over the corresponding figure of three lakh tonnes for December 1983. Effectively then, despite the 65:35 ratio officially drawn by the government, the release and the consumption of free sale sugar has been higher than 35 per cent. In 1983-1984, the consumption of free sale and levy sugar was almost the same, at 37 lakh tonnes each—increasing the ratio to 50:50, while the free sugar release at 30.85 lakh tonnes during the first eight months of the current sugar season has increased the ratio to 55:50.

The government has been forced to resort to large scale imports, to prevent a vacuum in the open market. Already five lakh tonnes have been contracted from the international sugar market for the period from April 1984 to January 1985, while 7.1 lakh tonnes has been bought for the period from April 1985 to June 1985. But while there have been imports, as one spokesman of the ministry of food and civil supplies put it, "the sugar stocks are not being lifted and distributed in time." It is this faulty distribution network that has led to an increase in prices as well as a shortage. Most of the stock is sup-



A closed sugar mill in West Bengal

posed to be sold at controlled rates at less than Rs six per kg through specified outlets such as super-bazars. But about 50,000 tonnes are also being auctioned at primary centres in the country, through the Food Corporation of India, to private traders.

In theory, the logic of importing huge quantities of sugar in order to contain galloping prices, is irrefutable but this does not work in practice. Even industry sources feel that though the import of sugar was a necessary evil, it should have been done efficiently. Says Pradeep Narang, managing director of Jagatjit Industries, "The government just does not have the machinery to distribute this sugar in the open market. It should be routed as levy through the ration shops." This is what the

ministry of food had done in the past two years when there were imports. What the industry and the consumers fear is the 1980-81 situation when despite substantial imports, sugar was available at an incredible price of Rs 15 per kg.

An explanation as to why the government insists on this policy, is the rate at which it gets the imported sugar. A sugar mill owner said that at present sugar is available at approximately Rs 2.50 per kg in the world market. Taking local prices which can vary from Rs six to Rs. 6.50, into account, and the cost of transportation and distribution, the government still makes a profit. Even if imported sugar is sold at the fair price shops at Rs 4.40 a kg the government would still stand to gain.

Certainly the industry could do

with some help from the government. While 65 per cent of the output is given to the government at rates below the cost of production the industry is expected to recover its loss on levy sugar by selling the remaining 35 per cent in the free sale market. But though the object of this dual pricing is laudable, the industry has suffered a staggering loss of Rs 800 crores over the past three years. The indirect control of the price of free sale sugar through untimely releases, which amounted to 55 per cent of the output this year, has caused a drop in free market prices as against the rising cost of production. Cane arrears have piled up to an astonishing Rs 500 crores and the industry is hard pressed both in sale and purchase. According to Narang, "What used to be a cash crop has now become a credit crop. No wonder the cane growers wish to divert their product to *khandsari* and *gur* units, which untrammelled by government curbs, are economically more viable."

Belatedly, however, the government does seem to realise the obstacles to sugar distribution, as it is now planning to divert some levy sugar to the open market which, in any case caters more to the bulk consumers like soft drink manufacturers and *halwas*. The union minister of food and civil supplies, Rao Birendra Singh, has already told the chief ministers of the various states about the importance of immediate despatch and sale of the imported sugar. Simultaneously, raids are being carried out against traders who have been hoarding sugar.

Though the common man will assume that high sugar prices are due to the avarice of the industry, a sugar mill owner said, "The government allows high cane prices to the cane growers and low retail prices to the consumers. Unfortunately, the industry is stuck between two powerful vote banks." For an industry that manufactured 84 lakh tonnes just a few years ago, the current output of 62 lakh tonnes, proves that things are certainly in a bad shape. An ISMA official said, "the government talks of closing down sick units, but there are factories in Bihar which only function for ten days in a year, and we cannot close them down." The government needs to take a few more steps to avert the crisis. Otherwise a once-thriving industry, which exported over Rs 800 crores of sugar in 1975 and 1976, may just have to increase its present imports valued at Rs 200 crores to a level that would certainly sign its death warrant.

INDIAN RAILWAYS

Computer Aid

The Indian Railways, the second largest railway system in the world, has finally decided to computerise its passenger reservation and freight operations. The first phase of the project will be completed by 1990. In fact, the railways had computerised freight and wagon operations more than four years ago and the seat reservation began a couple of years back. These schemes, however, were non-starters but the present government has re-initiated the project with renewed vigour. A positive effort was made when a technical team was dispatched to England and Canada to observe the systems there.

A Canadian agency, Canac, has been chosen to assist in the freight operation computerisation programme. The entire project, including software and hardware costs, is worth Rs 250 crores. Transmark, a British firm was rejected in favour of Canac since the latter has promised to finish the project by 1990, or the latest by 1991. The Canac system is claimed to work on IBM systems as well as on IBM compatibles.

The selection of a foreign firm has been criticised severely and local agencies are asking why a Canadian firm has been invited when adequate knowhow exists at home. Many eyebrows were also raised when the railways did not float an open global tender to invite local consultants. Many Indian manufacturers feel that the trend

of seeking external aid is becoming more pronounced and popular in government offices.

The World Bank is expected to advance a loan of 280.7 million US dollars to meet the Rs 520 crore computerisation plan. An agreement was signed between the Indian authorities and the World Bank on 25 May 1984, according to which Indian Railways were to hire a consultant within 60 days which it failed to do and finally ended up paying commitment charges of Rs 70,000 for each passing day after the mentioned date. So far, the government has already paid over Rs 1.93 crores.

The railway authorities plan to buy two super computers of 10 million bytes per second and an imported system, probably VAX 280, is likely to be chosen. This computer will handle around 45,000 transactions including ticketing, reservations, modifications, cancellations, refunds and allocation of seats and berths every day. The super computers will be linked to three smaller systems which will be procured indigenously. The CMC Ltd (Computers Maintenance Corporation) has been entrusted with hardware maintenance services and in return will be paid Rs 25 crore by 1989-90. With the introduction of this computer, to handle freight operations involving four lakh wagons, efficiency is expected to increase by 20 per cent.

Namita Sinha, New Delhi

Mekha Chandra, New Delhi

THE JOSEF MENGELE CASE

Tracking Down the Devil

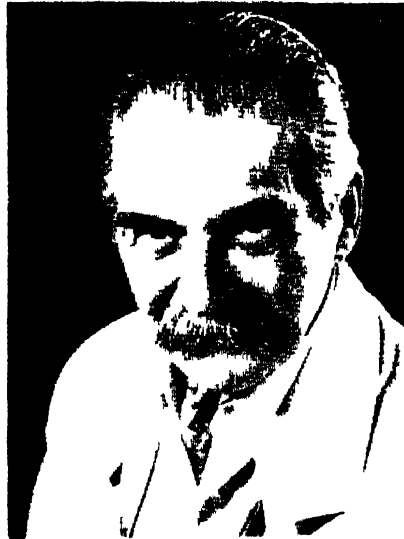
The "Angel of Death" probably drowned two years ago

Josef Mengele the notorious doctor of the dreaded Auschwitz concentration camp where millions of enemies of the Third Reich were interned and exterminated was one of the most wanted Nazi criminals. Although thousands had looked for him for nearly four decades and huge sums had been offered for finding him, dead or alive he was never caught. But recently scientists from Brazil, West Germany, the United States and Israel said that a body exhumed from the grave on the outskirts of Sao Paulo, Brazil, was with in reasonable scientific certainty that of Josef Mengele. The police were following a tip from the West German authorities that Mengele was in Sao Paulo. The tip led them to the Austrian immigrants Wolfram and Liselotte Bossert who admitted sheltering the infamous Nazi criminal. They led the police to the town of Imbu, 17 miles from Sao Paulo and to the grave where Mengele, who lived under the assumed name of Wolfgang Gerhard, was buried. The Bosserts told the police that Mengele had died while swimming on February 7, 1979.

As the news broke, people all over the world wondered how Mengele could have eluded justice for almost four decades despite a worldwide search for him. In fact demands for an intensified search for Mengele were made on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Mengele, who had a price of 10 million Deutschmarks on his head, was responsible for some of the most barbaric crimes in the Nazi concentration camps of the Third Reich. During his tenure as resident doctor of the Auschwitz concentration camp, he killed four lakh inmates and carried out the most inhuman experiments on them, particularly on twins, in order to obtain biogenetic information. In fact his victims, mainly Jews, interned political prisoners, homosexuals, Russian prisoners of war and Jehovah's Witnesses named him the Angel of Death. Mengele was obsessed with *Auslese*, *Zucht wahl* and *Rassen reinheit* or selective breeding and racial purity.

After the sensational disclosures by the sadistic doctor's son Rolf Mengele that he kept in touch with his father and even met him occa-

sionally, a number of people appeared to be unhappy about the way the searches were conducted. According to Rolf Mengele, the doctor had been in constant touch with his family in Germany, received contributions of 400 Deutschmarks every month and even played host to his son and his aged father when they were in Brazil. Rolf Mengele also disclosed that his father wrote to him regularly and even sent him a number of photographs. Sadly, one reason why the search for Mengele proved fruitless was because no authentic and contemporary pictures of his were available. The ones on the wanted posters which hung in va-



Josef Mengele

rious South American cities were from the 1940s.

Rolf Mengele, in an exclusive interview with *Bunte*, a West German weekly, said that he first met his father in 1956 during a skiing holiday in Switzerland where Mengele was introduced as an uncle. Rolf Mengele was then 12 years old. Three years later he was told that "his uncle" was actually his father. Rolf Mengele regularly corresponded with his father right up to the time of his death in the swimming accident. In fact Rolf, now a lawyer in Friedburg, even visited his father two years before his death and it was he who first confirmed that the skeleton exhumed on the outskirts of Sao Paulo in Brazil was of Josef Mengele.

Rolf Mengele said that his father never repented his crimes. When asked why he did not give himself up, he told his son, "For me there are no judges, only revenge seekers." According to Rolf, he justified the killings by referring to his victims as people whose lives were worthless. "He had never understood that no one has the right to judge whether a life is worth living, leave alone destroy such a life," Rolf Mengele said. He added that while he did not share any of his father's views, he did not want to betray him.

According to Rolf Mengele, one reason why the sleuths never found his father was because they had always looked for him in the more affluent sections of South American towns while his father lived in abject poverty in the poor and dirty area. Meanwhile, Simon Wiesenthal, the world's leading hunter of Nazi criminals, has written to West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl requesting him to hand over the money prom-



Rolf Mengele

ised as reward for finding Mengele to the victims of Auschwitz. Rolf Mengele spoke exclusively to *Bunte* only because the magazine has promised all revenue from reprints and copyrights to be made over to the victims.

Although Mengele's life might be over, his actions still haunt many of his victims. His death by drowning has removed the possibility of bringing him to justice. But as Henry Sobel, a rabbi in Brazil, has said, "Mengele's death does not really affect us. What affected us was his life. He destroyed Jewish bodies and Jewish souls. We will never forget. We will never forgive."

Kanta Talukdar, Bonn

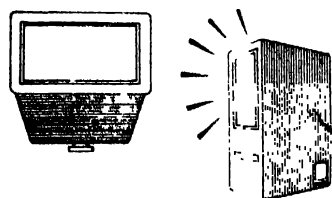
Whatever happened to Behram Uncle and a few important tips on how to use a flash.



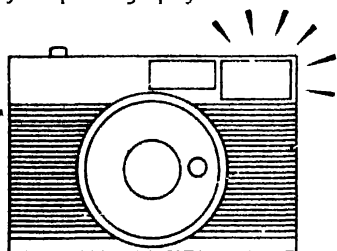
Poor Behram Uncle. There he was, all ready for a shot with his grandchildren and the photographer did him in. If only the chap was a little closer, the light from his flash would've got Uncle Behram into the picture.

Actually, using a flash is easy, but the trick is in controlling it to get a good image. Here are a few tips on how to make your flash your camera's best friend.

Understanding your flash



Your flashgun is your greatest asset when existing light is too low — it provides your camera with almost the same light as daylight. Another advantage is that you can also use the flash in daylight to restore detail and pleasing colour rendition in backlit portraits or to achieve a better exposure when your subject is in the shade. A flash can also 'freeze' motion — good when you're shooting frisky kids. Knowing your flashgun and its abilities (whether it's a built-in flash or a separate equipment) could be one of the best things that happened to your photography.



Flash points

If you have a built-in flash, take care that the flash window is above the lens, not below. Ignore this rule and you end up with 'monstrous' pictures — shadows thrown upwards.

Give your flash enough time to recharge (a little indicator will tell you when it's ready) and it will give the same intensity of light as before. Always remember to carry fresh batteries.

Since the actual light thrown on the subject is impossible to gauge, the exposure has to be calculated on the basis of guide numbers.

Take care your fingers or the flap of your camera case remains clear of the flash window. If they block it, underexposure will result.

Some points to remember

If you're using a flash against a white wall or a reflective surface, look out for glare. If you can't change camera angle, put a handkerchief or facial tissue over the flash to cut down on glare. Remember to adjust your speed to the recommended number (1/60 of a second is a safe bet — to avoid partly blackened exposures — generally experienced at higher speeds when flash-synchronization goes haywire).

If by chance you use a long exposure or leave the camera on auto and the auto has decided the situation needs a long exposure, you

will get one of two effects. The first is an overexposed image, the second an interesting blurred picture plus a sharp image from the flash — a fascinating effect.

A built-in flash seldom can light subjects beyond 20 feet (6m). See the flash or camera instruction manual to find the distance range of your unit.

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NEPAL

Trouble in Shangrila

Bomb blasts kill eight persons in Kathmandu

Even as King Birendra of Nepal stated that he would thwart any "attempt to undermine peace and order in the kingdom," in the wake of a peaceful civil disobedience movement launched by the banned Nepali Congress, fanatical anti-monarchists were placing time bombs inside important buildings including the royal palace in Kathmandu. The blasts which began on 20 June left at least eight persons dead, over 30 injured and the rest of the population in a state of panic.

The bomb-blasts, however, are not temporary aberrations. There have been frequent outbursts after King Mahendra, father of the present monarch, King Birendra, introduced the partyless panchayat system, after imprisoning the then Prime Minister B.P. Koirala, a number of cabinet ministers and members of the Nepali Congress (a party which is still banned) in 1960. This put an end to the democratic ambitions of the population of Nepal and began the spells of violence which have continued intermittently till 1976 before B.P. Koirala returned from voluntary exile in India and decided to discard violent methods to gain political control. Instead, he spoke of "national reconciliation," stating that his old party, the Nepali Congress, "was not against the institution of monarchy" but had realised its necessity under the circumstances and "accepted its constitutional form."

The first signs that this summer

would be one of discontent in the Himalayan kingdom came on 14 May when a delegation of the banned Nepali Congress led by the party's senior most leader Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and G.P. Koirala met the King giving him a memorandum asking for a restructuring of the panchayat system, and the "immediate restoration of the multi party parliamentary polity and the unconditional release of all prisoners."

Trouble, however, began on 20 June when bomb explosions in the King's palace, the Parliament and Hotel Annapurna rocked the city killing five people including a legislator Damber Bahadur Gurung and injuring 20 others. The Nepali Congress, which had been leading the civil disobedience campaign (about 7,000 people have already been arrested) condemned the attacks and temporarily called off the movement. The next day, while troops paraded on the streets and guarded the royal palace, the police began intensive searches, arresting 125 suspects and finding about 100 bombs. Meanwhile, the toll rose to eight with blasts taking place in a government store, a police station and a customs office in Birgunj.

A group which called itself the Samyukta Mukti Bahini claimed responsibility for the blasts. Leaflets thrown on the streets in the capital said that the terrorists would strike

again. Another radical group, the Janwadi Morcha, an underground organisation also claimed responsibility for the blasts in a letter signed by its president Ramraja Prasad Singh and two others. But moderate opposition leaders were arrested along with senior members of the Nepali Congress and the Nepali Communist Party. Among the leaders arrested were Maj Narendra Bahadur Thapa, brother of former PM Surya Bahadur Thapa. Also arrested was a Nepali (initially identified as an Indian), Rajinder Singh, on the Indo-Nepal border for carrying explosives into Nepal. During interrogations, Singh told the customs that an Indian national had handed over the package to him, promising that it would be collected across the border.

As the crisis deepened, the Nepalese Parliament urged strong measures to fight terrorism. Five former Prime Ministers—K.N. Bishra, Tulsī Giri, T.P. Acharya, N.P. Rijal and S.B. Thapa—urged King Birendra to tighten security measures. Despite the fact that two groups had claimed responsibility, a number of people blamed India for the blasts. After the all-too-familiar bogey of the foreign hand was raised by C.S. Thapa, the King's press secretary, several members of the Panchayat also criticised India for allowing the terrorists to run camps along the Indo-Nepal border. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statement of sympathy was also not "played up" by the local radio station and privately, a number of people have been blaming India for the blasts. But the Nepalese government has indicated that India's help would be sought in order to arrest the political extremists responsible for the blasts. Demands have also been made for the resignation of the Lokendra Bahadur Chand ministry by members of the Panchayat.

Life in Kathmandu, at the time of going to press, is slowly returning to normal but an air of uncertainty still prevails with the security forces guarding strategic areas. Entry to government offices have been restricted, Hotel Annapurna where three persons died on 20 June has been closed down and entry into the Sangha Durbar (the secretariat) barred. The home minister of Nepal, Mr Jog Mehar Sreshta, said in a statement to the Rashtriya Panchayat that the government was checking up on the activities of terrorists involved in the explosions. The government is also believed to be looking into allegations about the foreign hand, and investigating the sources of funds and arms for the terrorists.

A Correspondent, Calcutta



Gurkha troops marching through the streets of Kathmandu after the blasts

SPOTLIGHT

Making Waves

The dreams of Bengal's swimming sensation Bula Choudhury came true on 30 June when she left for Sydney with Australian coach Eric Arnold. According to earlier arrangements, she was to be trained by Bernard Johnke in East Germany. The plan fell through when the West Bengal government failed to give her the promised aid. A few

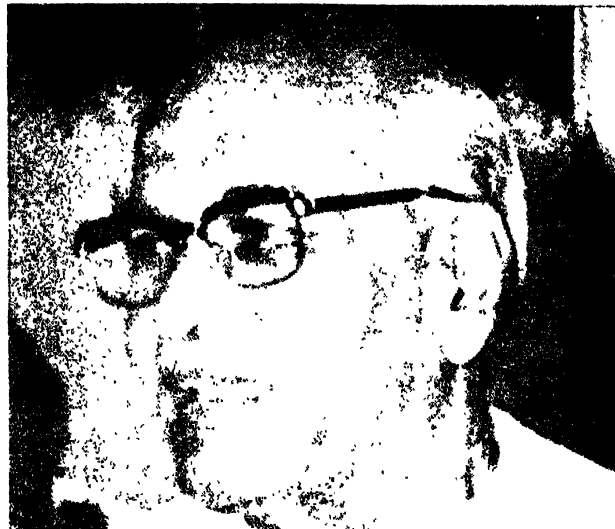


Bula Choudhury: swimming to fame

industrial houses agreed to sponsor her training trip to the US, but this too did not materialise. Nevertheless Lady Luck smiled

on her: at the initiative of Eric Arnold, the coach for the national swimming probables of the Asian meet, Bengal's water baby

crossed the Indian Ocean to begin her training in Sydney for the forthcoming Asian Games. She already has a redoubtable record: recently in New Delhi's Talkatora Complex she won three gold medals in the Federation Cup swimming meet, creating new national records in the 400m individual medley, 200m butterfly and 100m freestyle. Will this young swimmer bring India glory?



Ram Nath Goenka: undaunted fighter

No Browbeating Please

The grand old man of Indian journalism, Ram Nath Goenka, has been re-elected the chairman of the Press Trust of India (PTI). Having modernised its services to a considerable extent during his last term, Goenka feels the PTI should diversify its services to various regional languages, as he has done with the publications of his own group of newspapers. Chairman of the Indian Express group, Goenka has a fighter in him. Whenever he perceived a threat to the fourth estate, this undaunted champion of the

press has spoken up. Unfortunately he had many occasions to do so. Recently when the Gujarat police at the order of the Solanki government, entered the *Jansatta* press (Gujarati daily of the same group) and seized copies of the daily, the chief reacted. Reminding Solanki that he had seen many such attacks, his *Indian Express* kept up its reporting on the mess the Solanki government had created in Gujarat. The attack on *Jansatta* has only lent a sharper edge to *Express'* reporting. The old man will not be browbeaten.

Oxford Schools, the highest echelon of education, will be importing English from India. The head of the English department of Elphinstone College, Dr Mehroo C. Jussawala's edition of the Book 1 of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* will be used by the Oxford Schools, bestowing on her the honour of being the first Indian to take English back to her motherland. The book, published in 1982, could not impress Indian academics, but found acceptance with the Oxford Schools in June 1984 when it was recommended for A-level English literature papers III and VIII. According to Dr Jussawala, "Perhaps they could not appreciate it, because of the lack of scholarship." But India's loss

Carrying English to Oxford



Dr. M.C. Jussawala: teaching English to the English

became Oxford's gain.

Dr Jussawala's unique achievement has many years of hard work and scholarship behind it. For her doctorate, she analysed the works of Edmund Spenser, and through her research, attempted to establish the technique of allegory as a literary form. A B.A. (honours) from Oxford, her interest took her to Harvard, to the lectures of Professor Albert Lord, a pioneer of folklore teaching. Besides teaching and guiding eight Ph.D students, Dr Jussawala is presently looking beyond Edmund Spenser's *Elizabethan England*—to Maharashtra folklores. Her attempt would be to conquer the language: "I have all the time to do that when I retire after three-and-a-half years."

The Spirit is the Trouble



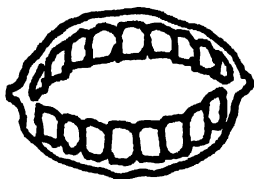
Researchers in England have identified chemicals in alcoholic beverages that may account for migraine headaches that are touched off by alcohol in some people. The chemicals, especially plentiful in red wine, the worst offender for migraine sufferers inhibit an enzyme that deactivates substances that produce headaches. A research team at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, England, said that many red wines can cause a complete inhibition of the enzyme but white wines have less of an effect. Among spirits, vodka and gin had the least effect and were less inhibiting than white wine or brandy. No relationship was found between a beverage's alcohol content and the extent of enzyme inhibition.

A Portable Life-saver

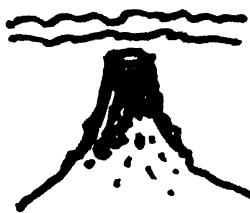
Researchers at the Saint Vincent de Paul hospital in Paris have given a new lease of life to young children who are struck with diabetes. Dr Pierre Bougnères and Fabienne Landier have developed a portable insulin pump which continuously supplies insulin. This has shown a spectacular improvement in the control of glycemia (the presence of glucose in the blood). Though the pump has been experimented on adults, it has not been applied to children below ten years of age. The Microjet MC 20 or the portable pump comprises a thin tube which connects a 17 mm needle implanted in the subcutaneous tissue. This is linked to a pump weighing 180 gms. The pump is carried on the child's back to prevent him from touching it and is battery operated. Moreover, the pump can be programmed and operated on two speeds: the first speed ensures a steady flow of insulin that has been predetermined. The other speed can be obtained by pushing a button which injects an additional dose of insulin at meal times in the diabetic patient.

Vaccine for Fighting Tooth Decay

A research in Britain has come up with a potentially quick, cheap and simple way of preventing dental disease. Scientists at the Royal College of Surgeons' research establishment at Downe have developed a vaccine against *streptococcus mutans*, the bacteria which is largely responsible for the process which leads to tooth decay. The project began more than ten years ago. In animal studies the vaccine has proved 80 per cent effective against dental caries, and having passed safety tests, is now ready for clinical trials in humans. Prof Newell Johnson, director of the project, asserts that the vaccine may prove useful to Third World countries which are now seeing an upsurge in dental decay as their diet becomes more westernised.



Spewing Lava in the Pacific



A huge underwater volcano and other features have been discovered by scientists working on the largest project to date to map the ocean floor. Analysis of computer-generated pictures produced by a sonar imaging system during a 100 day voyage last year yielded 'stuff that has never been seen before', said Dave Cacchione, one of eight US Geological Survey scientists to make the trip aboard the British ship *Fairweather*. The volcano, 1500 feet (4550 metres) beneath the Pacific Ocean off the northern California coast, and which with its crater is six miles (10 kms) wide, showed signs of recent activity, the geologists report.

Harmful for the Brain

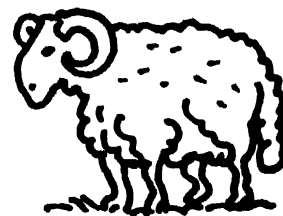
Parkinson's disease, which leads to body spasms and muscle stiffness, is partly caused by excessive use of pesticides, according to a top Canadian researcher. Andre Barbeau, head of neurobiology at the Clinical Research Institute in Montreal, said he found more victims of Parkinson's disease in agricultural areas sprayed with exceptionally high levels of pesticides. He noted that aging and genetics were other factors that caused the disease.

Discovering a "Living Tank"

Soviet scientists have found the remains of dinosaurs that roamed what is now Mongolia's Gobi desert 60 to 70 million years ago. A joint Mongolian-Soviet expedition has discovered the skeleton of *testaceous ancylosaur*, calling the creature a "living tank with thick plates of stone armour weighing several tons." It said the scientists also found a huge skeleton of a *torbosaurus*, a meat-eating reptile with sharp notched teeth.

AIDS: The Search For a Cure

In England, Edinburgh University's department of veterinary pathology is about to begin a five-year programme of research on the immune system in sheep which is likely to help them investigate the causes of AIDS, the acquired immune deficiency syndrome, in humans. The work is aimed at understanding how the immune system works, and how immune deficiency states arise as a result of viral infections. Immunological studies in sheep have contributed to a large extent to immunology research because the sheep's immune system has unique features. The new programme is being financed by the Agricultural Food and Research Council and is linked with the Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh, which is noted for the study of diseases in sheep.



VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 7 JULY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May)

Financially your prospects look bright but avoid extravagance. This is an excellent week for businessmen and professionals. Creative artists and intellectuals will also find this phase favourable. On the domestic front a sudden turn of events will relieve you of a lot of tensions. A pleasure trip is in the offing. However guard your health closely.

Good dates 8, 9 and 10

Lucky numbers 1, 3 and 4

Favourable direction North



LEO (15 August—14 September)

This is an extremely lucky week for most of you. The domestic front will remain inspiring and most of you will gain through inheritance. Sportsmen and artists will benefit from this favourable phase. However this is not a good period for lovers. A letter at the end of the week will bring pleasant surprise. But watch your health closely.

Good dates 9, 10 and 11

Lucky numbers 2, 6 and 8

Favourable direction South east



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January)

The first half of the week is not very promising. Domestic problems will continue to bother you but do not get depressed as things will brighten up soon. Your health will add to your problems. Social engagements will keep you busy during the second half of the week. Financial prospects will look up and a pleasant journey awaits some of you.

Good dates 7, 10 and 12

Lucky numbers 3, 5 and 6

Favourable direction North



TAURUS (15 May—14 June)

This is a favourable week for romance and your family will also remain peaceful. Friend and relatives will be particularly helpful. Those hoping for a promotion on the professional front will be rewarded. But be careful dealing with your superiors. Guard against debt and watch your health. Watch out for a pleasant surprise.

Good dates 11, 12 and 14

Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 5

Favourable direction East



VIRGO (15 September—14 October)

Professionals and businessmen are advised to be cautious in their dealings this week. Financially this is not a good period and you may have to borrow money. The domestic front will add to your worries. However the phase is favourable for courtship and marriage negotiations. This is a fruitful week for students.

Good dates 7, 9 and 10

Lucky numbers 3 and 9

Favourable direction North west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February)

This is not a good week for those in love. Petty quarrels may lead to estranged relationships. Businessmen should be wary of deception. Your health will also bother you. However this is a good period for those employed in the private sector, artists and sportsmen. A letter will bring good tidings towards the middle of the week.

Good dates 8, 10 and 12

Lucky numbers 4, 6 and 8

Favourable direction South east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July)

Your financial prospects are not too bright this week. You may suffer financial loss incurring a lot of expenditure. Professionals should deal diplomatically with their superiors. This week is also heartening for lovers. Students will come out successful in examinations and athletes will bring good news. Lawyers and politicians will also find this a favourable phase.

Good dates 7, 8 and 9

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 6

Favourable direction South



LIBRA (15 October—14 November)

Fortunes are not favourable for all of you. Lovers are advised to postpone marriage plans. Professionals are likely to come under severe criticism from their employers and one of you may even be transferred. Businessmen should be wary of deception. At home you may be misunderstood by someone close to you. However a letter will bring good tidings.

Good dates 8, 10 and 11

Lucky numbers 1, 6 and 7

Favourable direction South



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March)

This is a very lucky week for lovers, students and businessmen. Do not squander away the opportunities that come your way. However prospects look bleak for professionals and financially you are in for a bad phase. The health of your children will add to your worries. But this is the ideal time to settle law suits pertaining to property matters.

Good dates 8, 9 and 13

Lucky numbers 1, 4 and 6

Favourable direction West



CANCER (15 July—14 August)

This is a week of mixed fortunes. Professional may come in for severe criticism from their superiors and businessmen are likely to suffer a setback. Financial prospects are not too bright and on the domestic front your wife may suddenly fall sick. However this is a favourable period for those in love. The last two days are particularly favourable for artists.

Good dates 10, 11 and 12

Lucky numbers 4, 5 and 7

Favourable direction West



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December)

This week is particularly lucky for lovers. Students who have appeared for competitive examinations will come out with flying colours. Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway. However one of you are likely to suffer loss this week. Avoid undertaking peer trips. Those above 45 should be careful of their health.

Good dates 9, 12 and 13

Lucky numbers 4, 7 and 8

Favourable direction North east



PISCES (15 March—14 April)

For those intending to get married this is the ideal time to execute plans. If you want to start a new business, this is the right time to do so. Professionals should consult elders before changing their profession. Friends and relatives will prove helpful in resolving domestic problems. Those above 50 should guard their health closely.

Good dates 7, 12 and 13

Lucky numbers 2, 7 and 8

Favourable direction North

For those born between 15 June and 14 July

Most of you have an inborn talent for knowledge. You tend to question whatever strikes you as illogical. This is true even with religion as are suits of which you run into misunderstanding with older people. You are also adventurous and you like to explore the unknown. Some of you are emotional and often let your heart rule over your head. You may run into serious trouble if you do not curb your habit of taking hasty decisions. Women born during this period are usually very hardworking and capable.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



VISAKHAPATNAM A young lad, who for the thrill of it travelled ticketless in a train, grew up to become a custodian of the law and displaying rare honesty paid the railways the fare—some 20 years later. Bevara Samuel, a police constable, sent Rs 30 to the railway authorities at Waltair recently, stating that he had travelled sans ticket from Vizianagaram to Parvathipuram and Rajahmundry during his childhood. He requested that the amount be accepted pleading that a child's peccadillo be pardoned. However the railway authorities replied that the actual fare for the journey was not Rs 30 but Rs 71. Samuel immediately sent them the balance.—*Free Press Journal* (VN Tambekar, Pune)

MADRAS Mr Charan Singh is the United Nations secretary general, George Bernard Shaw, an union minister and Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the external affairs minister. These are some of the howlers by candidates who appeared for the general knowledge test for the group I services of the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission in 1978-79. Some had named the former state chief secretary, Mr V Karthikeyan, as the UN secretary general. Others said the former President, Zakir Hussain, was responsible for the partition of India. Sarojini Naidu was the first qualified Indian lady doctor who prepared medicines for diseases like malaria and rabies. Some had defined an oasis as "a sort of wine widely used by the desert people". The howlers were published in the annual report of the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission, which was placed on the table of the State Assembly recently.—*The Telegraph* (Praveen Rai, Dhanbad)

ALLEPPEY They were born together, grew up together, practise the same profession, share the same name and are not separated even by marriage or in their sick bed. The two octogenarian Govindaramans, who are presently in a single sick bed at the district hospital, suffer from no serious illness. It was only at their friends' compulsion, that they got themselves admitted to the hospital. They are cared for by their beloved wife, Janaki (67) who recalls her wedding day, when both men had tied a *thali* on her at the age of 11. Now they are a family of 12 including their children. The twins are farmers and also practise *ayurveda*. They eat from one plate, sleep on a single cot and speak simultaneously.—*The Times of India* (Naveen Rai, Dhanbad)

JORHAT A tree has been attracting huge crowds for its peculiar behaviour. Located five kms away from Jorhat town, it rains occasionally. Water is seen coming out of its leaves. According to the local people the tree rains continuously for five to six days and then stops for a few days. Water comes out of its leaves especially on sunny days. It is said to be very tall and the local people call it the *ghila* tree.—*The Sentinel* (Gauri Prasad Sarma Bezbor, Guwahati)

BELLARY A school teacher who arrived here by bus got the surprise of his life when he opened his suitcase to find currency worth Rs 80,000. Police said the suitcase apparently had been accidentally switched during the journey. The teacher later surrendered the suitcase to the police and sought help in locating his own suitcase. The police have commended his honesty and the investigation is on.—*Indian Express* (Hema Girish, Bangalore)

DEVANGERE A strange case of elopement, where a bridegroom ran away with his bride on the day of the wedding, has come to light. The local unit of the Communist Party here had arranged four marriages at the sub registrar's office recently. The other three couples were all there, but not Thipperudrappa, the fourth groom, nor his bride Anasuya. Later, it was revealed that this was to be Thipperudrappa's third marriage. He had allegedly taken Rs 9000 from the father of his new bride. His first wife came to know of it and complained at the party office. But before the marriage could be cancelled, Thipperudrappa eloped with the bride, taking his brother and sister with him.—*Deccan Herald* (K R Suresh Kulkilaya, Barkur)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Rajiv Gandhi is only pro-India—Shrikant Varma, indicating that there has been no ideological tilt towards either the USA or USSR, in *Time*.

I do not want West Bengal to be turned into a desert—Jyoti Basu, asserting that the state government had every right to invite multinationals to set up industries in West Bengal, in *The Statesman*.

I am enjoying my freedom—Atal Behari Vajpayee, when asked whether he missed Parliament, in *The Telegraph*.



There have been lots of people who opposed me in the film world, but I triumphed, didn't I? So let's see what happens in politics—Amitabh Bachchan in *The Week*.

The American people are slow to wrath, but once their wrath is kindled, it burns like a consuming flame—Ronald Reagan, on the hijacking of the TWA airliner, in *The Times*, London.

The modern terrorist is megalomania plus high tech—Editorial in *The Economist*.

When I see waste here, I feel angry on the inside—Mother Teresa, on the money being spent on the Festivals of India in France and the United States, in *The Times of India*.

I was never a professional (in films). I could not survive in the world of cut throat competition—Sivaji Ganesan in *Indian Express*.

VARIETY

CHESS

This week's game features a well known 'coffee house' theme in a slightly unusual setting. I am told it was Bent Larsen who once said that the secret of chess is knowing what to do with your king's rook's pawn. I suspect there is a second secret of chess, which is knowing what your opponent is doing with his king's rook's pawn. This is a secret Herr Klinger discovers one move too late.

White: J. Klinger. Black: A. Martorelli. Mitropa Cup. Bad Lauterberg 1984.

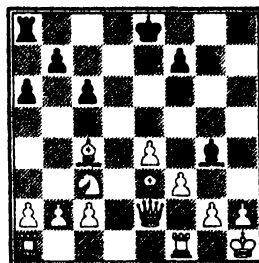
1 P-K4 P-QB4 2 N-KB3 P-K3
3 P-Q4 PxP 4 NxP P-QR3
5 B-Q3 N-QB3 6 NxN QPxN
7 O-O P-K4 8 N-B3

The knight looks out of place here. Normally in this line it would go to B4 via Q2.

8 ... N-B3 9 K-R1 B-QB4
10 Q-K1 P-KR4

Here we go. The idea is ostensibly to meet

Martorelli (Black) to move



Klinger (White)

P-B4 with ... N-N5, from where the knight is immovable

11 B-QB4 P-R5 12 B-K3 Q-K2
13 Q-K2

The point of this move is not quite clear, but it does have the effect of giving immediate and dramatic justification to the advance of Black's KRP.

13 ... B-KN5 14 P-B3

DIAGRAM

14 ... N-R4!! 15 K-N1

If 15 PxR N-N6+ 16 PxN PxP+ 17 K-N1 R-R8+! The king's sidestep comes too late.

15 ... N-N6! 16 BxP+

A desperate attempt to deflect the black queen.

16 ... QxB 17 PxN PxP
18 PxR Q-K2 19 R-B3

A better last fling would be 19 P-N5 QxP 20 R-B8+ hoping for 20 ... KxR 21 BxR+ or 20 ... BxR 21 BxQ, but 20 ... RxR 21 BxR Q-R5 is good enough.

19 ... R-R8+ 20 Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

South made no great attempt to land his Six Spade contract on the deal below, but I think he might have done it.

Dealer East N-S vulnerable

♠ K 9 8
♥ K 8 6 3
♦ K 4
♣ A 9 6 3

♠ 7 6 3
♥ 4
♦ J 9 8 6 2
♣ K J 8 5

N

♠ 5
♥ A Q J 10 9 7 5 2
♦ 10 3
♣ Q 7

W

♠ A Q J 10 4 2
♥ —
♦ A Q 7 5
♣ 10 4 2

E

East opened Four Hearts and South overcalled with Four Spades North bid



4NT, which may or may not have been conventional. The partnership ended in Six Spades and West led ♥ 4.

Counting a diamond ruff, South can see eleven tricks, and this was all he made. However, there are two chances. If spades are 2-2 and East has a singleton club, he can be thrown in with a heart, when he has only hearts left, and forced to set up dummy's king. When the trumps are seen to be 3-1, the best line is to duck a club and play on reverse dummy lines,

reducing to:

♠ 9
♥ K
♦ K 4
♣ 9 6

♠ 7
♥ —
♦ J 9 8 6
♣ K

N

♠ —
♥ A Q J 10
♦ 10 3
♣ —

W

♠ Q
♥ —
♦ A Q 7 5
♣ 10

E

When the last heart is ruffed, West may undertruff, but he is still lost when declarer crosses to ♦ K and leads ♠ 9

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- Which European country is called the land of thousand lakes?
- The *balaenoptera musculus* is the largest and heaviest mammal in the world. How is it better known as?
- What do the following have in common. Mungoon, Chonan, Kaisarglock and Tsar Kolokol?
- What is scorched earth policy?
- What do the initials SHAPE stand for?
- Who was the first Indian to play test cricket?
- Autumn Sonata*, *Wild Strawberries*, *Fanny and Alexander* and *Winter Light* are films directed by which famous filmmaker?
- In the 1984 Olympic Games, Pakistan won the men's hockey title Which coun-

try won the gold medal in the women's event?

9 Only two Indians have been awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously. Name them

10. What is rhinology?

11 Name the astronomer who first established that the Earth and Mars orbited around the Sun.

12 In philosophy, what is relativism?

13 Where is Fort Worth airport?

14 Where in India is the Shivpuri national park?

15. Who invented the long-playing record?

- 13 Dallas, USA.
- 14 Madhya Pradesh
15. Peter Goldmark of the USA in 1948

1. Finland.
2. The blue whale.
3. They are all large bells.
4. A wartime move to destroy all resources and means of sustenance before invading the enemy during the retreat.
5. Supreme Headquarters of Allied Powers in Europe.
6. K.S. Ranjitsingh. He played for England against Australia.
- 7 Ingmar Bergman.
8. The Netherlands.
9. Govind Ballabh Pant and K. Kamraj.
- 10 The study of diseases of the nose.
11. Copernicus.
12. The reflection of the concept of the absolute.

ANSWERS

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Shape Sleuth

	A	B	C	D
1	X	●	▲	+
2	+	X	■	●
3	■	▲	X	●
4	●	+	■	X

The same four symbols appear only in two of the small squares. Which are the two? Remember they may not be in the same order

Witsharpener

This problem is as old as the hills, but even so, can you work it out? An egg man sold to Mr Lal half his stock of eggs and half an egg. He then visited Mr Ray's house and sold to him half of his remaining stock half an egg. Finally the eggman sold the rest of his stock which was 33 eggs to Mr Dutt, and very relieved to have got rid of the whole basket of eggs, went home

How many eggs did the egg man have to start with? Not one of his eggs was broken!

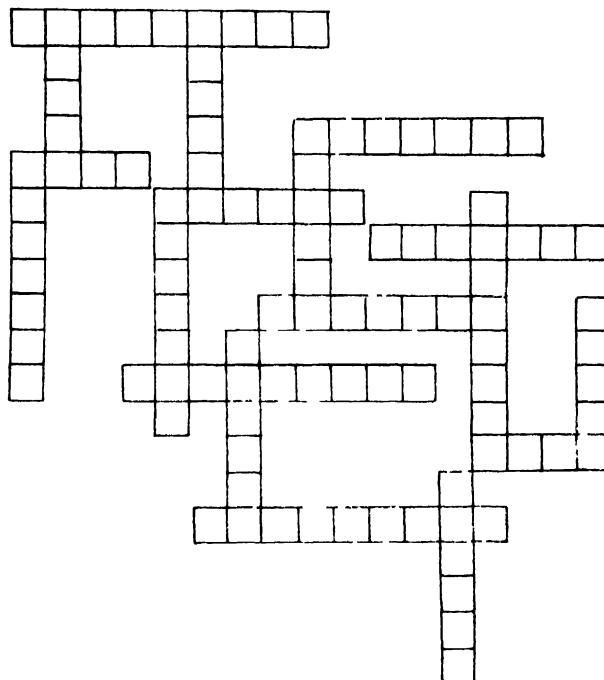
Mindbender

	1	2	3	4	5
A					
B					
C					

Can you study Column 1 and then fill in the blank squares with suitable figures which show the same relationship as exists in Column 1 between A, B and C?

Title Tussle

Here are some titles of books and songs. Each of them, you will notice, contains the name of a place, though this name has been left blank. First work out what the blank should be and then enter the place names in the grid given below. We give you the first letter of each answer to help you on your way.



Clues

- Passage to — (I)
- It's a long way to — (T)
- Hamlet, Prince of — (D)
- To— with love (R)
- Oh! — (J)
- Two gentlemen of — (V)
- Eyeless in — (G)
- The Blue — (D)
- Our Man in — (H)
- John —, Gentleman (H)
- The ballad of — Gaol (R)
- The Vicar of — (W)
- (B) Rock
- A Town called — (A)
- Death on the — (N)
- The Ascent of — (E)
- The Merchant of — (V)
- A Small Town in — (G)

What's in a Word?

- How quickly can you find
- 1 anagram of INSTANCES
- 2 anagrams of MAGENTA
- 3 anagrams of STRIPE
- 4 anagrams of STARE
- 5 anagrams of SPREAD

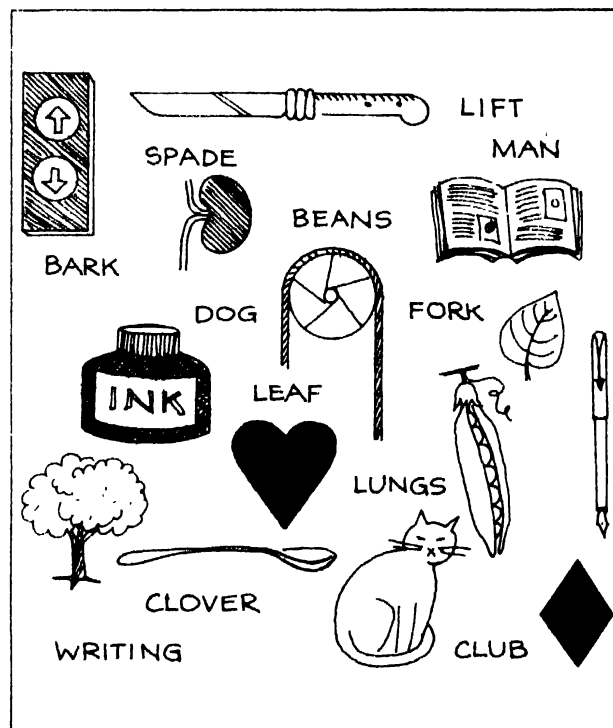
TEASERS

Figure it Out

8		3		2
	4	=	24	
7		5		9

Starting at 7 and moving in sequence, find one way in which you can fit in all the four arithmetical signs in the blank squares so that you arrive at the answer 24 as is shown in the illustration. Remember that two of the signs feature twice.

Mind Bender



In the diagram above are some pictures and some words. Make groups of three, using either two pictures and one word or two words and one picture, for example, the groups could be:

Spade, fork and
Or Spade, Club and
Heart
Diamond
Page
Peas
SPLEEN

Score off the words and pictures, as you go along. You will be left with one picture and one word. Which word from the list completes this group of three?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Quick Think: 1835, 899, 1758, 984

Word Power: Mobile, Under, Lamps, Toad, Irons, Palnter, Lumber, Yawl. Tables can Multiply!

Figure it Out: There is no way out if the princess is required to travel only horizontally and vertically. If, however, she can travel diagonally, there are many ways out 341-55-286; 341-55-761; 165-231-330-462; 231-330-462; 176-132-176-132.

Shape Sleuth: We have been able to count upto 114 triangles. Has any reader come up with more?

Mindbender: If the circumference of the large circle is 2 metres, then the circumference of the circle with half the radius and quarter the radius will be 1 metre and 0.5 metre respectively. There are two full circles (made up of 4 semi-circles) of radius half that of the large circle, and four full circles (made up of 8 semi-circles) of radius 1/4 that of the large circle. Therefore, the total length of wrought iron used is 6 metres.

Word Play:

B	O	R	R	O	W	E	A	P
R	R	A	N	D	O	W	N	O
E	R	I	N	G	O	V	Y	N
L	P	I	L	O	R	E	A	S
C	S	A	I	L	E	R	W	W
Y	S	S	I	N	G	I	N	N
C	E	N	I	K	P	A	I	N
I	N	T	A	E	R	G	N	S
R	T	S	A	F	D	A	E	T

Witsharpener:

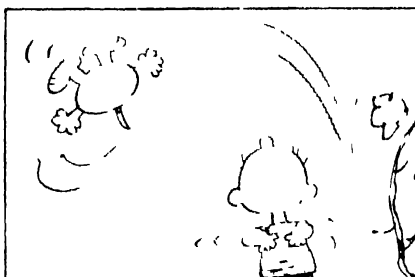
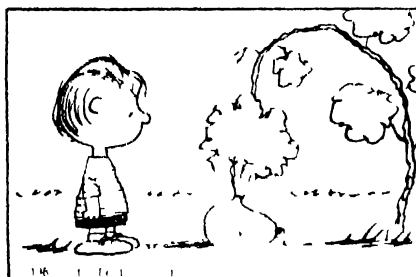
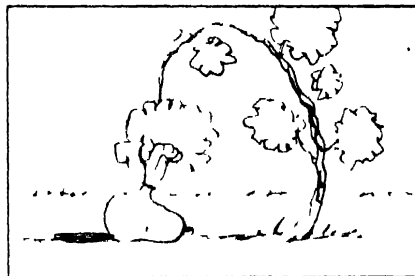
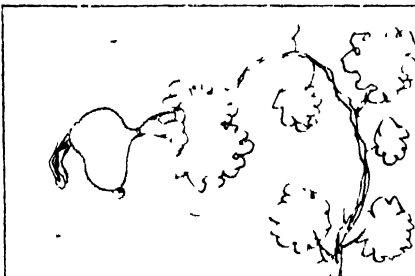
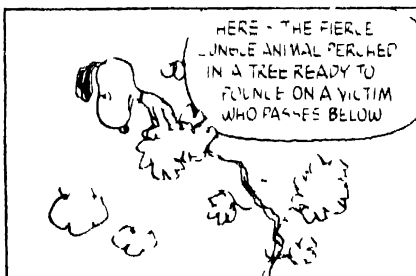
Look at the salary offered by the second firm:

Day	Salary (p)	Day	Salary (Rs)	Day	Salary (Rs)
1	1	9	2	16	200
2	2	10	4	17	400
3	4	11	8	18	800
4	8	12	16	19	1600
5	16	13	32	20	3200
6	32	14	64		
7	64	15	128		
8	128	16 (Approx.			
	(approx.	Rs 100)			
	Rs 1)				

For the engineer, the salary in the last five days is more than Rs 6000, so it is worthwhile for him taking up this job. But the first man, he will earn a total of Rs 327.67 in the first 15 and Rs 327.67 in the next 15 days; so, the job with a salary of Rs 1000 a month is better for him.

PEANUTS

featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by Schulz



SCIENCE

Ocean Farming: Prosperous Prospect

While dismissing farming the oceans as a pipedream, marine biologists used to say that nutrients are dispersed too thinly in the water to make the domestication of more than a few sea-dwelling plants and animals feasible. They are beginning to change their minds. A team of American scientists has found a cheap and simple way to farm king crabs on artificial reefs in the Caribbean.

The idea for these ocean farms came from research into underwater coral reefs by Dr Walter Adey, director of the marine systems laboratory at Washington's Smithsonian Institution. He and his colleagues wondered how the reefs supported large and diverse populations of living things despite the scarcity of nutrients in the surrounding water.

Dr Adey unravelled the mystery in two parts. First, he made detailed studies of Caribbean reefs to understand how they made the most of the nutrients at their disposal. Waves and currents proved a key element: their action constantly renews the reefs' supply of scarce nutrients.

Sunlight filtering through to plants on the reefs enables them to carry on photosynthesis and thus produce carbohydrates. The water washing over the reefs contains the phosphorus and sulphur that animals and plants need to make protein.

Solving the second part of the mystery was harder. Living things need to have access to soluble nitrogen to make protein, yet most of the nitrogen in the ocean is in gaseous form. This puzzle was solved not in the Caribbean but in Washington, where Dr Adey's team simulated the life of a tropical reef in the Smithsonian's 12,000-litre test tank. The scientists discovered that the gaseous nitrogen was being captured and turned into soluble form by several types of blue-green algae, the primitive bacterium-like plants at the base of the marine food chain.

Soon after the Smithsonian's indoor "reef" started working five years ago, the scientists noticed something else. Some of the algae that had been floating invisibly in the imported ocean water began to stick in visible quantities to the walls

of the tank. Why should they not grow equally well in the open sea, provided they were supplied with some sort of surface to take the place of the tank walls? They had to be tethered six or eight inches below the surface, where there was enough wave and current action to keep the water stirred up to renew the supply of nutrients.

The crabs are now being farmed. When they are housed in underwater pens fitted with the algae-laden fibreglass mesh screens, the crabs hatch from eggs within 24 hours, and grow to a market weight of two kilograms—about 40 per cent of it meat—in just over a year. Their meat is so delectable—and so readily canned and frozen—that Dr Adey reckons crab farming will provide jobs for thousands of people in tropical countries.

Dr Adey's team is therefore being backed with enthusiasm by America's Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps and a private organisation called Earthwatch.

By arrangement with The Economist

Many explanations have been offered for *Naseeruddin Shah's* absence at the 32nd national film awards function. Some of them were: serious misunderstandings with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), "a fight" with *Shabana Azmi* and hence the refusal to share the same platform with her. However, the truth is that two days before the programme, Naseer and his wife Ratna flew to London for a month's holiday. He had been planning this holiday for a year and had even refused to sign a number of films. "I am not going to let anything come in the way of my holiday," Naseer confided in a friend.

Critics of *Smita Patil* are watching with concern the change that has come over the talented actress. She is signing any film that is coming her way, charging exorbitant prices and slowly acquiring the airs of a super star. Some say it is due to the influence of *Raj Babbar*, the man who controls her life and career.

Finally it's all over between *Mithun Chakrabarty* and *Sridevi*. After a stormy affair with the belle from the south, Mithun realised that the best thing was his home and his family. "I wanted everyone to be happy and that's why we decided to part. But we will always be good friends," Mithun said before he left for Vienna to have his kidney stone removed.

Rekha has become more career-conscious these days. She has apparently forgotten her torrid affair with *Amitabh* who she called "the only man who means everything in my life." She is now determined to find "good roles" and "good directors." "I have had enough of all the playing and fooling around. It is high time I



Aarti Gupta: southern expedition

did some serious work, something that I will be remembered for," says a changed Rekha. That she meant business was proved when she agreed to play the leading role in Gulzar's *Ijaazat*. Earlier Rekha had vowed never to work with Gulzar after their ego clash during the making of *Namkeen*. She has now decided to forget the past and look to the future.

Menaka, who has been clinging on to the top spot in Malayalam cinema, recently had a bad experience in a five-star hotel in Trivandrum. There was a knock on her door at midnight. She opened the door

Rekha: no more fun

thinking it was her fiancée who was staying on the same floor. But to her surprise and horror two residents of the hotel forced their way in and attempted to molest her. Luckily, some other film stars staying on the same floor rescued her. The midnight intruders were arrested by the police and later released.

Aarti Gupta has decided to try her luck in Malayalam films. The model-cum-film actress, after hanging around Bombay's studios for ages, will figure in her maiden venture opposite leading Malayalam actor *Mohan Lal*. She is expected to be a rage with the Keralites who are only used to rather bulky heroines.



Missing Link

Tariq Anwar, the Congress(I) MP from Katihar, is in a quandary. His constituency is adjacent to Malda, which has been nursed through governmental patronage by Abu Barkat Ataul Ghani Khan Chowdhury, the former railway minister. By pleading with Ghani Khan Chowdhury, Tariq Anwar had been able to make the railways convert the Barauni-Katihar metre guage line to broad guage.

On 17 October 1984 the railways had announced that from 1 November Katihar would have a direct broad guage link to Delhi. The Assam Mail presently runs between New Delhi and Barauni on the broad

guage and there is a metre guage link between Barauni and New Bongaigaon. With the broad guage line between Barauni and Katihar having been completed the train can run right through from New Delhi to New Bongaigaon on the broad guage now. Apparently there has been some delay in executing the railways

plans, which has put the young MP from Katihar in an awkward position. In case of the new railway project in Katihar, while Rs 65 lakhs is needed for

it, this year's railway budget has only provided Rs three lakhs. It is not the opposition, but the ministry of railways which Tariq Anwar dreads most these days.

courts reopen after summer vacation is action expected to be seen in the courtroom. In the Larkins case, however, the trial is also through. The verdict on the Larkins brothers, both retired general staff officers of the armed forces, is expected to be delivered by the end of July.

Spies and the Law

What is happening in the two spy cases which are before the courts now? Not much progress has been made in the Coomar Narain case, which began in January this year. Only when the

Trusted Guards



Arjun Singh

The Punjab Governor, Arjun Singh, prefers to rely upon not only bureaucrats from his home state, Madhya Pradesh, but also on the armed constabulary of that state. He has taken his handpicked IAS officers from Bhopal to Chandigarh. That can be understood, as the governor must be given a free hand in choosing his personal staff. And officers like Sudip Banerjee have a proven record. But the induction of these officers has created bad blood in the Punjab secretariat.

The deployment of a contingent of the Madhya Pradesh Special Armed Force (MPSAF) around the Punjab Raj Bhavan has annoyed the local police officers. The MPSAF, however, cannot be treated as a Madhya Pradesh force alone. Apart from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the union government has at its disposal two battalions each of MPSAF and the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary (RAC) as part of the central reserve. Apart from these two forces, the Tamil Nadu Armed Police has surplus strength, which has been placed at the disposal of the Delhi Police for VIP security duties. (During the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu in the Sixties, the additional strength of the armed police had been raised. With law and order in that state fairly stable, the reserves are being now utilised in the capital.

While the MPSAF has a role as a central reserve contingent, would it not have been prudent for the Punjab government to deploy CRPF men around the Governor's residence?

Alert Security

The official spokesman of the Congress(I), the AICC general secretary Shrikant Varma, had a bad experience at Calcutta airport on the evening of 16 June. He was carrying a camera in his hand bag.

The overzealous security-men, oblivious of the powerful satellites which hover over the earth these days, insisted that the Member of Parliament

could not carry a camera on board a Delhi-bound aircraft. Shrikant Varma politely pleaded with the policeman. But the guardian of the law was adamant. Only when a journalist, who was undergoing a pre-flight security check too, intervened and



Shrikant Varma

revealed Mr Varma's identity was the leader allowed to have his way. While clearing Mr Varma, the West Bengal police officer told the journalist, "You please ensure that he does not use the camera while flying."

A Nine-day Month

June 1985 will not only go down in the history of the government of India as the month when its offices started working on a five-day week schedule but also as a month when the union government's effective working was restricted to only nine days. The weekend holidays accounted for nine days. Only one day the offices were closed for Id, and between 4 and 18 June, the Prime Minister was abroad along with a host of ministers. The Prime Minister's secretariat in New Delhi had only two functionaries—parliamentary secretary Oscar Fernandes and Makhan Lal Fotedar (who technically

is a part of the AICC staff, being political advisor to the Congress president). As decisions are centralised at the highest level these days, no major files could have been cleared for 21 days of the month. With parliamentary secretary Arun Singh away with the Prime Minister, cabinet secretary P. K. Kaul had an opportunity to assert his position in the government.

TAILPIECE: What is the easiest way to describe the government's ban on extensions to superannuated employees? Some young bureaucrats have devised an abbreviation: RAPE (retiring aged personnel early).

D. E. Nizamsuddin



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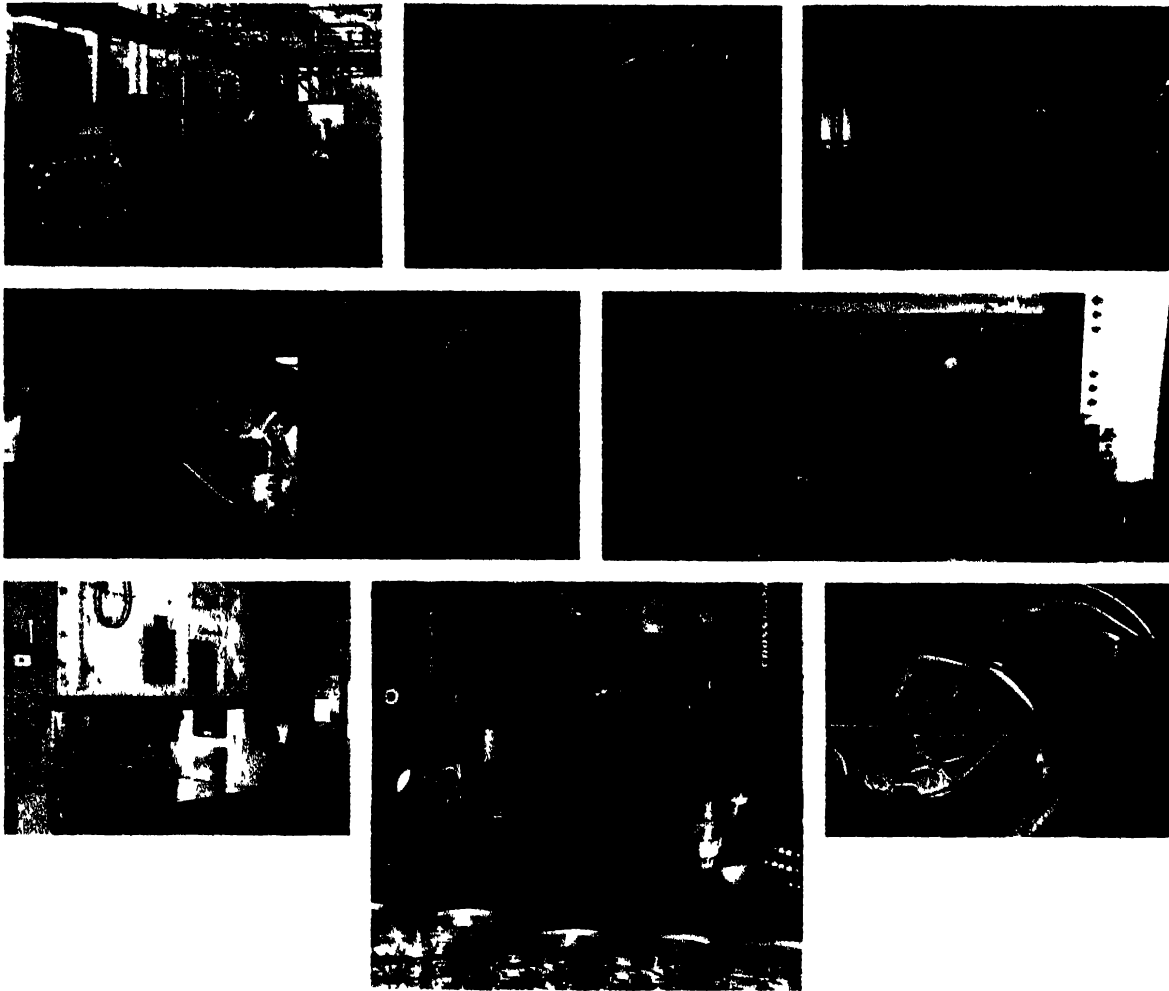
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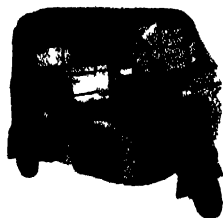


Bajaj Automation

The reason why Bajaj Auto is the largest scooter maker is fairly simple.

Automation: The technology that helps produce India's finest scooters and three-wheelers. The system which transfers much of the responsibility for production and quality control from the operator to the machine.

That's how Bajaj Auto made over 300,000 vehicles last year. That is how we will be making over 700,000 vehicles a year by 1987-88.

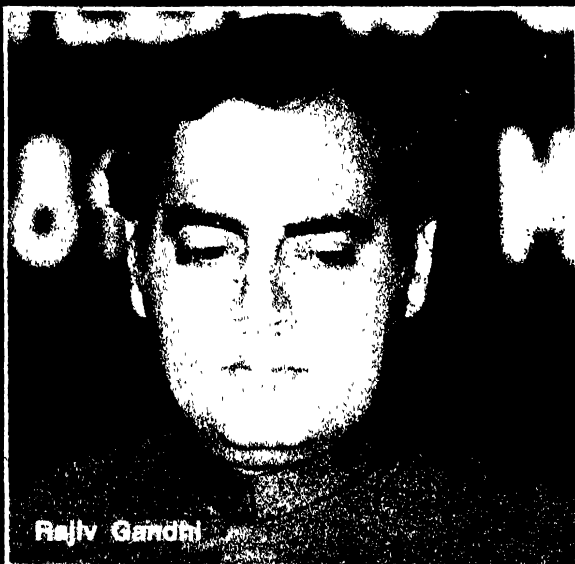


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Congress(I) MP in Bank Fraud

SUNDAY



Rajiv Gandhi



Giani Zail Singh

Presidents and Prime Ministers

A history of their tensions



**Field
Marshal
NTR**

*"I thought Superlac
would just transform our walls..."*



*...but look what it's done
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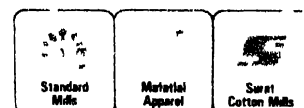
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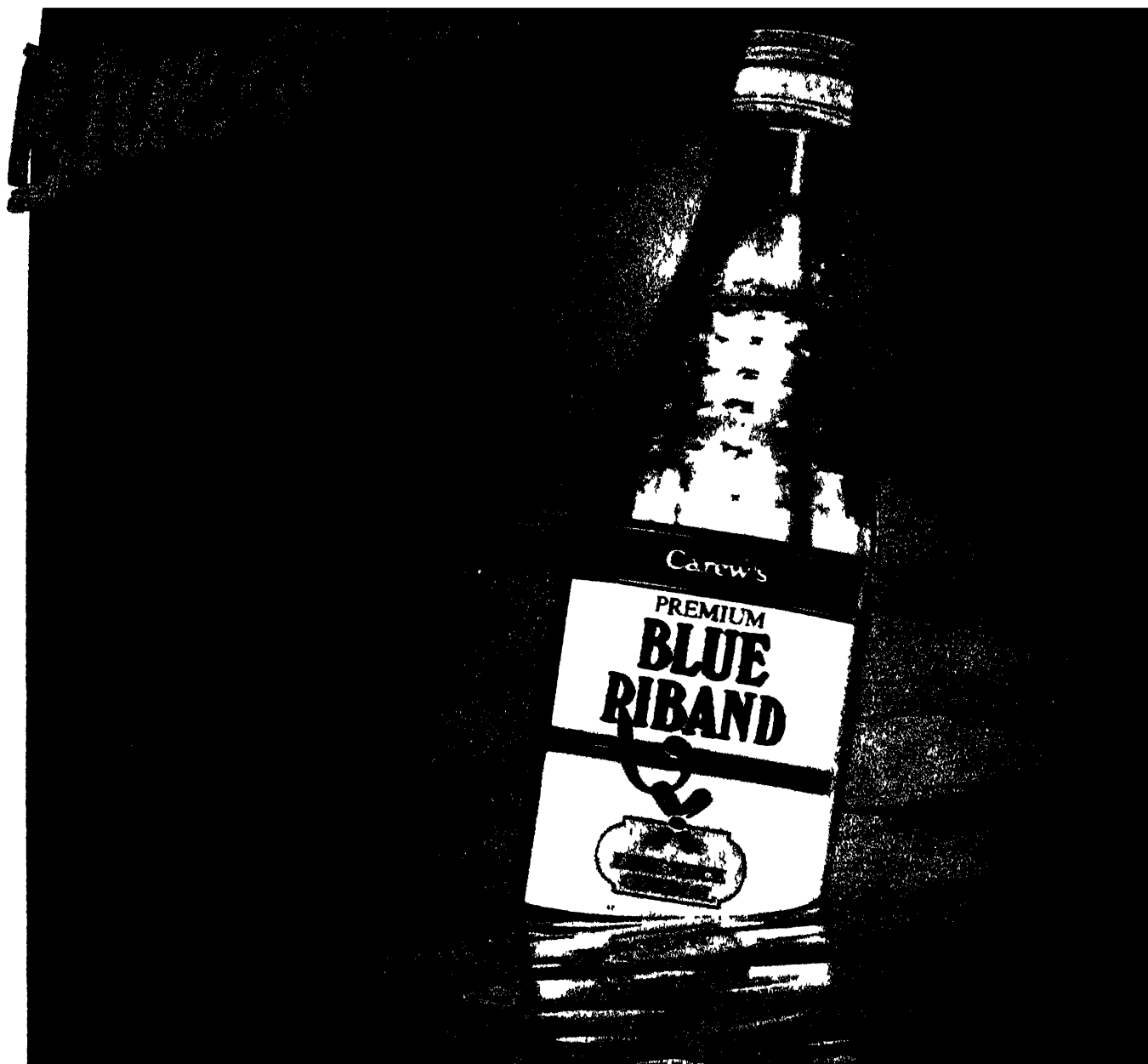
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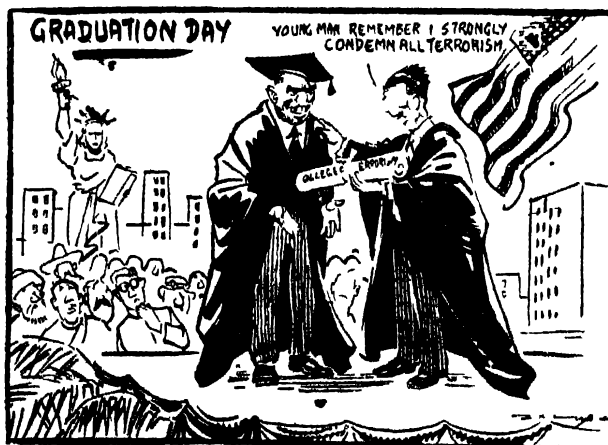


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PUNCHLINE/R K LAXMAN



Cover transparency of
N T Rama Rao by
Mediaphoto, of Zail Singh
by Sondeep Shankar and
of Rajiv Gandhi by
M L Kainth

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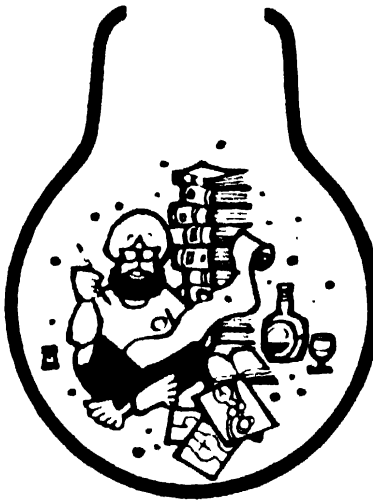
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Bombay Revisited

Everytime I come to Bombay it looks different. It was always crowded; it has become more congested. It was always dirty; it has become dirtier. It was always smelly; now it stinks. Monsoon showers wash away floating sewage into the gutters and for a while there is a breath of fresh sea air. When the sun comes out the city's myriads pour out of their multitiered anthills and soon every street becomes a seething mass of crawling human insects. Or so it appears from the windows of air-conditioned penthouses perched like *machans* up half-a-kilometre in the sky from where the privileged look down on the denizens of this man-made jungle of cement and glass. Shiv-Senapati Bal Thackeray and ex-Maharashtrapati Dada Patil have a good case: there are more people in Bombay than Mumbai can cope with. It may not have occurred to them that far too many of them are Maharashtrians.

I was in Bombay for the sixth anniversary celebrations of *Mid-day*. At the innumerable receptions given by the proprietor-editor, Khalid Ansari, I tried to count how many of his guests would pass the linguistic and/or sons-of-the-soil test often invoked by propagandists of the Maharashtra-for-Maharashtrians school. Most of them like his Parsee guests like Rusi Karanjia (*Blitz*), his brother Burjor (*Screen*) and Gulshan



Ewing (*Eve's Weekly*) are Bombay born. They understand a little Marathi, but I doubt if any of them can speak it well enough to pass an elementary *viva voce* test. Most of the others were domiciled Bombayites whose Marathi vocabulary would barely go beyond yelling *Ganpati Bappa*.

Why do I pick on Bombay when all our metropolitan cities are quite squalid and congested? And in every-one of them the recently domiciled are doing better than those with deeper roots? For the single reason that urban overcrowding is a national phenomenon which has to be tackled on a national level. Bombay is the only city where leaders who should

know better are trying to solve their problem by rousing parochial passions. They should know that appeals to local pride can be dangerously infective. If Mumbai sneezes today other cities will go down with cold tomorrow.

Nth Sense

My short write-up on the extra sensitivity that some animals and birds possess has provoked Vikant Sahay to cite an instance of the uncanny sense of smell beyond the normal that human beings can acquire. He mentions the case of snake-catchers. We know that snakes are deaf and all the *been* playing does not charm them in the slightest. Nevertheless we often see snake-charmers going around bushes and trees where they suspect snakes to be hiding and blowing lustily through their gourd pipes. Somehow they manage to locate serpents and catch them. According to Sahay snake-catchers get the smell of snakes from the earth. He narrates an encounter with a party of snake-catchers who came into his garden in Asansol. One man dug up some earth and presented a clod to his chief who sniffed it, prodded it with his *trishool*, recited an appropriate *mantra* and gave a description of a snake in close vicinity. The snake that was hauled out of a bush answered to this description. Apparently this technique of smelling out snakes is practised in the Kamakhya region of Assam.



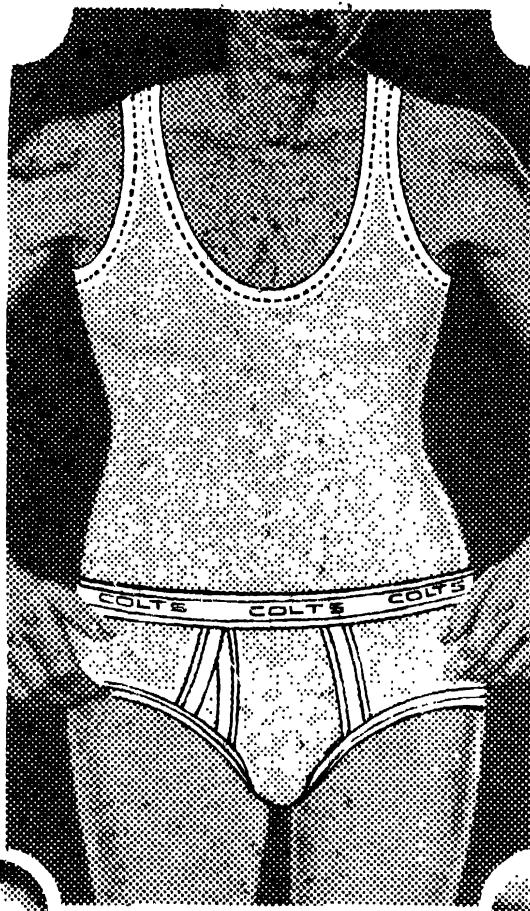
Commuters walk along the railway tracks at a suburban station near Bombay: overcrowding

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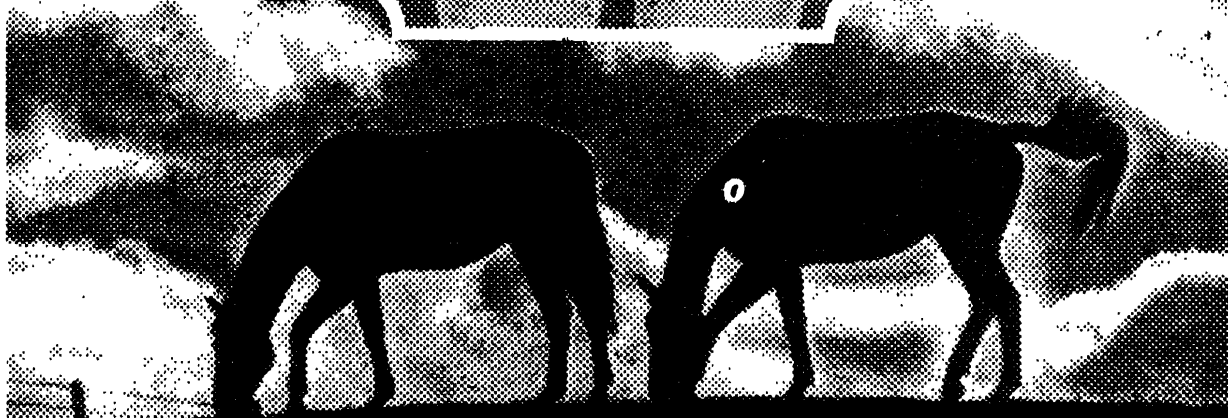
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Doing Away with Conventions?

Recently while talking to the press in Delhi Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, when asked why he had not met President Zail Singh before leaving the country for his five nation tour, which was the convention, replied that he was willing to do away with conventions. But how true is this? Does the PM sincerely want to do away with conventions? If that be so, he has not been able to put an end to the numerous practices which have become a part of the ruling party's culture. An instance: whenever the Prime Minister either leaves or returns from a foreign tour, cabinet ministers, chief ministers and other Congress(I) functionaries assemble at the airport, while matters of national importance lie on their tables. It is as if chief ministers have no work in their states and cabinet ministers, who are always moving about on "urgent business," now have all the time in the world.

During a visit to Hyderabad in 1981, when he was merely the Prime Minister's son, Rajiv Gandhi was furious at the arrangements which were made to welcome him. In fact, T. Anjiah, the then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, had to resign shortly thereafter. As Anjiah had told me at that time, "The home ministry sends us orders to ensure tight security for Rajiv, and he, on the other hand, takes us to task for doing so." It was a rather harsh punishment, but it showed that Rajiv Gandhi did not like being fawned upon. Again, after taking over as the Prime Minister following the assassination of his mother, he sent the chief ministers who had gathered in Delhi back to their states to contain the anti-Sikh riots which had broken out. This clearly showed the attitude of the young PM. That is why I find it surprising that he has not stopped the practice of the assembly of leaders or what I would like to call the *mela* at the airport.

Another practice from Mrs Gandhi's days which still lingers is administering the country even while abroad, instead of deputing someone to act on his behalf. During Rajiv Gandhi's five nation tour a courier left Delhi everyday with important files and letters for Rajiv Gandhi to see and dispose of. Mrs Gandhi was averse to decentralisation and she did not trust anyone. Therefore, she did not want to depute anyone who could be consulted in her absence on important matters. This led her government into trouble on a few occasions, because she could not be consulted while in transit. On one such occasion, the opposition forced a debate on a no-confidence motion.

But Rajiv Gandhi appears to be of a different mould, and from all accounts, is

not against decentralisation. So I was surprised when I gathered that during the PM's tour of the Soviet Union and the West, no cabinet meeting was held nor was there any meeting of the political and economic cabinet committees. And not that there was any dearth of pressing problems in the country during that period: clashes with Pakistan on the Siachen Glacier in the Ladakh region were going on. True, Rajiv was kept constantly informed about these matters, but the cabinet could have met, discussed the issues and then informed the PM of its decision. Perhaps the manner in which the cabinet functions when he presides over a meeting indicates why it does not meet in the PM's absence. Rajiv Gandhi does not behave like a school teacher. He is courteous and polite but many are of the view that a matter comes up before the cabinet only after a decision has been taken on it by the PM and his close aides.

Mrs Gandhi had isolated herself from her own partymen. However she utilised every opportunity to mingle with the masses and acquaint herself with everything that was happening in the country. For security reasons Rajiv's appointments are very limited and he has to rely on his close group of advisers and the intelligence agencies for information. But regrettably, his sources of information hardly portray the truth.

The intelligence agencies, particularly the RAW, seem to be well informed of what is happening abroad. The ambassadors and the ever-agile foreign secretary Romesh Bhandari are also there to brief Rajiv Gandhi on international affairs. But regarding events at home, Rajiv's channels of information appear to be inadequate.

Rajiv is surrounded by a handful of people. True, security should be given top priority, but the PM should at least be accessible to members of the cabinet and important bureaucrats. There are some who complain that not only is the Prime Minister inaccessible but also letters sent to him often remain unacknowledged.

Notwithstanding security compulsions, Rajiv should allow different viewpoints to be presented, so that he is able to make an objective assessment of a situation. And the old practice of holding *darbars*, which was a distinctive feature of Mrs Gandhi's regime, should be replaced by a more meaningful dialogue with those who might hold a view different from that of the government.

Doing away with practices like the airport *melas* would be more fruitful than doing away with healthy conventions like the Prime Minister reporting periodically to the President on matters of importance.

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A Dark Period

The cover story, *Never Again* (23—29 June) brilliantly analysed the various aspects of the Emergency clamped 10 years back by Indira Gandhi. The supreme power of democracy and the role of the opposition have been rightly highlighted. *Durga Prasad Ghose, Hooghly*

• I was too young in 1975 to realise the nature of the excesses perpetrated by the authorities in the name of Emergency. *SUNDAY* has done a commendable job by acquainting people like me with the details of that dark period. The articles by Janardhan Bhakur and Kuldip Navar left me restless. But Shrikant Varma appeared more as a Congress(I) spokesman than an objective analyst. *B Ganesh Jamshedpur*

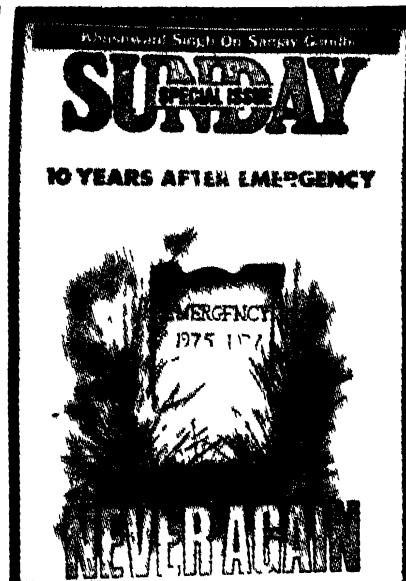
• The special issue on the Emergency was a balanced one. While Khushwant Singh and Shrikant Varma defended the proclamation of Emergency, there were others to criticise it. *Malay Kumar Nandi Calcutta*

• The Emergency had its positive side too. It made us realise the value of our constitutional freedoms. The Emergency also exposed a number of politicians. The people punished the Congress and voted the Janata to power in 1977. But their hopes soon withered away and Indira Gandhi was back at the helm. *Nujhar Dasgupta, Calcutta*

• The special issue rightly highlighted the atrocities committed on the innocent people during the Emergency. In the name of enforcing law and order, a lot of excesses were perpetrated. *Mahesh Prasad Roy, Varshali*

• I do not agree with R K. Karanjia that 'We are in Need of a Mini Emergency'. It is useless to spoil the future by thinking of the past glorious or dark whatever it might have been. *P Lala Akra (West Bengal)*

• It was disheartening to note that not a mention was made of the eminent journalist K S. Ramchandran in the special issue on the Emergency. The then general manager of the Press Trust of India. Mr Ramchandran was most ignominiously sacked from his job as he opposed the merger of the news agencies. Totally dispirited by the treatment meted



out to him, he fell ill and died within a few months. *N Shivaram Bangalore*

• I cannot forget those dark days of the Emergency when I, as the president of the Berhampur City Coordination Committee of Unions and Associations, was arrested and ill-treated in jail. In fact, things are not much better now. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act 1985 empowers the government to imprison anyone without invoking the Emergency provisions. In the name of preservation of democracy, an undeclared Emergency is in force. *Abir Padhy, Berhampur*

• 'Where are They Now?' was absorbing. It was evident from the write-up that most of the so-called heroes of the Emergency were in fact weak people. The one person who dominated the show was Indira Gandhi. *S Venkatasubramaniam, Calcutta*

Koran Revealed

I was delighted to go through Rafiq Zakaria's treatise, *The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims* (9—15 June). All religions are complementary to one another, and Avatars and Prophets visit the earth from time to time. The marauders associate their deeds with religion to cover their misdeeds. It is high time everyone joined hands in the efforts to foster Hindu-Muslim unity. *S K Chakraborty, Durgapur*

• Dr Zakaria's article was a bold effort to portray the Koran in its true perspective. The petitioners who

sought a ban on the holy book should preserve the portions from the Koran which Dr Zakaria has quoted to substantiate his argument that the Koran is tolerant towards followers of all faiths. *Mohd Nizam ul alam Laskar, Assam*

• It is sad that a few motivated persons are trying to hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims by misrepresenting the Koran. In view of the country's present critical state, it is high time the authorities dealt severely with those fanning the flames of communalism. *Hussaini Syed Adil, Hyderabad*

• The author maintains that the Ayats of the Koran have to be understood in their proper historical background if a candid assessment of the holy book is to be made. However, this sort of an understanding is limited only to a few like Dr Zakaria. The vast majority of the mullahs I have come across rely on the traditional interpretation which is thoroughly communal. They identify the kafirs with the Hindus. I sincerely hope that Dr Zakaria will exhibit similar alacrity as he has shown in countering the claims of the petitioners in spreading the rational interpretation of the Koran among the Muslims. *P Joshi, New Delhi*

• Had Dr Zakaria's interpretation of the Koran been true, the Muslim rulers of India would not have razed temples to the ground. *Pardeep Mittal, New Delhi*

Unreasonable Demand

The news item *The Demand of a Gorkha Land* (5—11 May) has pained a sizable number of Indian Gorkhas. The demand of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) for a separate state is unreasonable. Moreover, the GNLF wrongly assumes that Gorkhas are concentrated in areas in and around Darjeeling, in fact they are spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Thus if the GNLF is to represent the aspiration of the Gorkhas, it has to take into account the Gorkhas living elsewhere too. The demand for a separate state is a wishful thinking of some self-seeking maniacs. If the Gorkhas have genuine demands, they can always approach the government of India rather than seek the help of foreign countries. *K N Sharma, Dehra Dun*

India Goes West

Only time can tell how successful Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the west has been and whether the west has truly been won or not (*Is the West Being Won?* 2-8 June). However, India should not sever its age old ties with the Soviet Union which has time and again come to the help of our country. Moreover, Rajiv Gandhi should not forget that America is still supplying arms to Pakistan.

Param Hans Singh, Arianah

- In keeping with her non aligned stance, it was only natural that India should strengthen her ties with America since she is already friendly with the Soviet Union. Rajiv Gandhi has done a commendable job by undertaking the trip to the west in the face of a lot of criticism.

Arabinda Kumari Padhee, Sambalpur

- India should not be transformed into an American base. We should never forget that the USA had always sided with Pakistan in the past. Indira Gandhi had looked upon America with suspect but I fail to understand why Rajiv Gandhi is thriving with the west.

Praveen Rai, Dhanbad

- Shubhabrata Bhattacharya had rightly observed Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Moscow as most appropriate. The reception given to the Indian Prime Minister by the Soviets was warm and authentic. It remains to be seen what has been achieved through Rajiv Gandhi's journey to the west. Will the USA respond to our Prime Minister's call for a nuclear freeze? Will they relinquish arms supply to Pakistan?

K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

- If the USA is really interested in improving its relations with India it

should immediately ban the activities of Sikh terrorists in the USA. However, I appreciated the FBI's efficiency in unearthing the heinous plan to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi.

Devendra Bisht, Meerut

- The cover story was a sincere effort to give a historical sketch of Indo US relationship and what went wrong between the two largest democracies of the world. It is sad that the two countries which have so much in common should view each other with distrust and hold divergent views on important international issues. The US foreign policy in South Asia being openly anti Indian has left India with no choice but to 'tilt' towards the USSR. Realising India's importance in South Asia, the USA tried to make the Indian PM's visit to that country a successful one. While good relations with the USA are undoubtedly desirable, the Americans should pay heed to India's concern over the arming of Pakistan.

Pattha Pratim Banerjee, Howrah

- I do not agree with Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's view that Indira Gandhi's foreign policy tilted neither towards the east nor the west. Why should we feel guilty in admitting that Russia is our friend? There is no need to look upon this relationship as a 'tilt'. In view of Pakistan arming itself our friendship with the Russians is all the more essential.

B. R. Nanda, Lucknow

- Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the US was nothing but a mere eyewash. How can Rajiv Gandhi contribute to world peace when he is unable to maintain harmony within India itself? It is time India stood on her own feet.

S. S. Raju, Bombay

Corruption in Kashmir

SUNDAY deserves praise for exposing the corrupt government in Jammu and Kashmir (*A Disaster Called G. M. Shah*, 16-22 June). Things have gone from bad to worse since last July when the present government was formed by engineering defections much against the wishes of the Kashmiris. One fails to trace the motive behind the continued support of the Congress(I) to this inefficient and corrupt administration.

Arif A. Mir, Srinagar

- It seems that Kashmir is going to experience a revolution in the near future due to the malfunctioning of

the unpopular government headed by G. M. Shah. The situation in Kashmir brings to my mind the authoritarian and undemocratic state of affairs in Pakistan. One wonders why the Congress(I) is still silent.

Subroto Nandi, Dhanbad

- Sankarshan Thakur's report on the non performance of the Jammu and Kashmir government was comprehensive. It is evident that the G. M. Shah regime in Srinagar feels insecure due to the lack of popular support and continual dependence on the Congress(I) legislators.

Ravindra Grewal, Calcutta

Richman's Pastime

The cover story, *Is Video Killing Cinema?* (9-15 June), was informative. However, I felt that the photographs published with the article were totally irrelevant. The fact that such indecent pictures found a place in SUNDAY shows the indifference of the press towards aesthetic values.

Sumita Som, Calcutta

- I see no reason why the film industry is trying to establish that video and TV serials are killing cinema. As video is essentially a rich man's commodity and TV serials are meant only for drawing room entertainment, these cannot really serve the recreational cause of the general public.

Ranendra Chrestien, Calcutta

The Crisis of India

I was disturbed to go through the state of India portrayed so vividly in the cover story *A Summer of Discontent* (16-22 June). The union government, state governments, intellectuals as well as the common people should take a firm and resolute stand to restore unity among our countrymen.

Anwar Alam Qumaispuri, Patna

- *Assam: Old Issues, Fresh Efforts* was interesting. The grim picture of the Nellie massacre published with the article serves as a rare historical document highlighting the government's failure to protect the lives and properties of the minorities during the so called Assam movement.

Narayan Roy, Saapatgram (Assam)

- *Refugees to Humanity* was moving. The organisations fighting on behalf of the Tamils in Sri Lanka should realise the hardships their fellow beings are facing in the numerous refugee camps in Madras. It is time they realised that violence is not the answer to their problems.

Bani Kumar Ray, Calcutta

Wrong Usage

I have something to add to Khushwant Singh's *Central Hall Chat* (*Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 23-29 June). On hearing that my brother passed the school leaving examinations one of my neighbours came up saying, "Consolations! Consolations!" On yet another occasion someone introduced me to his friend saying, "Aive main apko insey intercourse karwata hoon."

S. Deb, New Delhi

Field Marshal NTR

Saffron-robed film star-turned-politician Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, once a champion of opposition unity, is talking less and less about it as he becomes increasingly intolerant in his dealings with his party men—the opposition, the civil servants and even his close friends and admirers. SANKARSHAN THAKUR finds out how NTR has changed and why

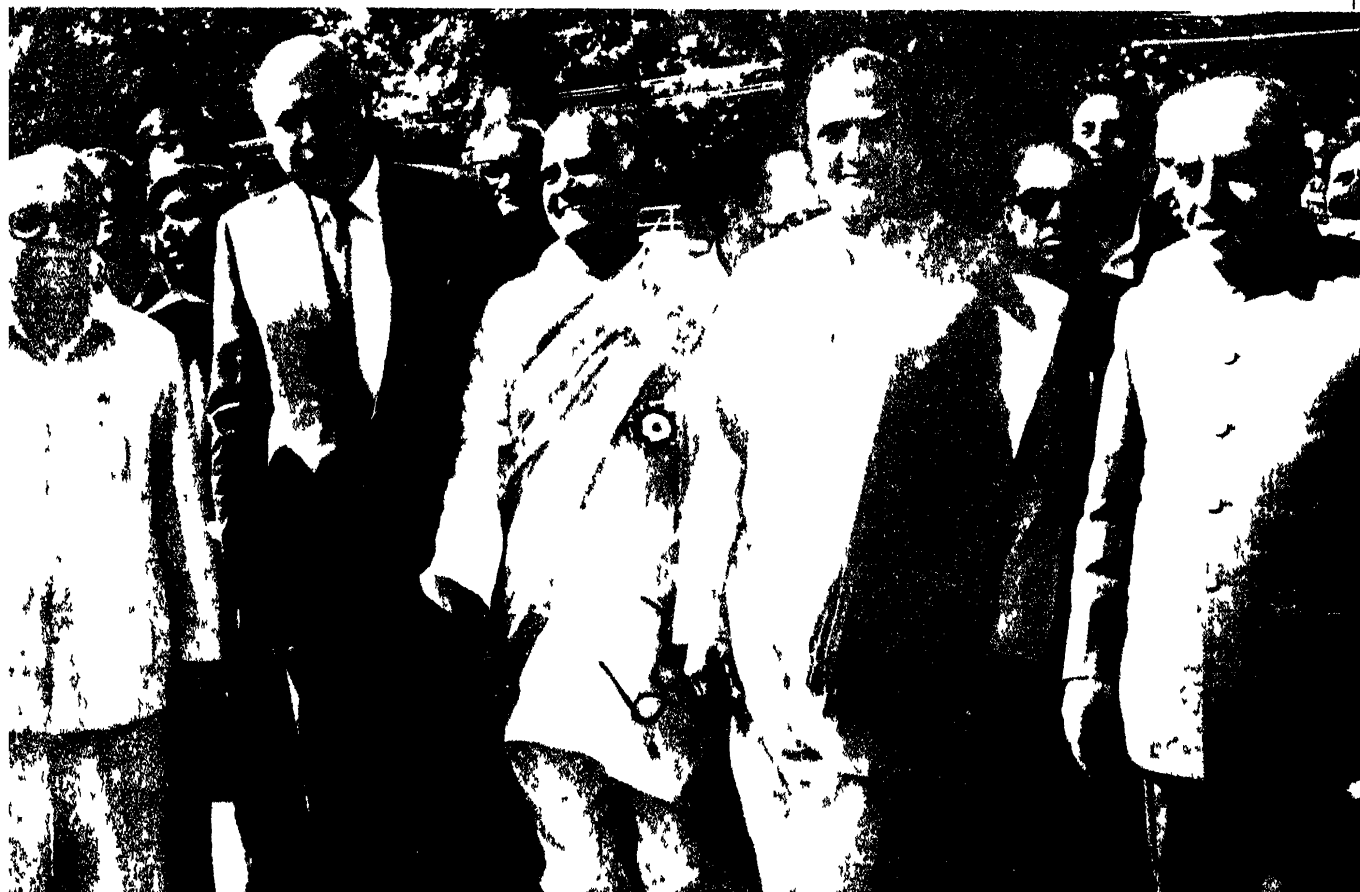
The forthcoming session of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly might well mark a crucial turning point in the politics of the state. Ever since the truncated session following the Assembly elections in March earlier this year, chief minister Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR) has come in for a lot of criticism. The overzealous lot of Congress(I) legislators are not the only ones who will be gunning for him but also the 32 members of the CPI, the CPI(M), the BJP and the Janata Party are waiting to pounce on NTR. Strange, for hitherto this 32 member group in the Assembly was NTR's supporter. They fought the elections hand in hand with NTR and his Telugu Desam, they spoke for him on public platforms and led the struggle for his restoration when

NTR was temporarily unseated in August 1984. These equations have fast changed in recent months. NTR is no longer the hero he used to be of the non Congress(I) political parties. He might not have become their opponent but is well on the way of becoming one. Said N. Giri Prasad, secretary of the Andhra unit of the CPI: "It is quite strange but today we find it difficult to differentiate between the way the Congress(I) ruled this state and the way NTR is administering Andhra Pradesh."

Talk to any of NTR's friends in the non Congress(I) camp and they all have similar things to say. NTR is no better than the Congress(I). He has, in the words of one opposition leader, "shamelessly gone back on everything that he stood for in the initial stages of his political life."

The NTR they had supported had stood up against one party, one family rule, today NTR defends the extra constitutional authority of his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu and talks contemptuously of every political party other than his own. He had stood up against the arbitrary nature of the Congress rule in Andhra Pradesh but today his own government bypasses the Assembly and promulgates ordinances. The non Congress(I) parties had supported NTR who stood up against the Congress(I) chief ministers of Andhra, criticising them for depending too much on the rulers in Delhi. Today he himself rushes to the centre at every opportunity. "NTR" said Bandaru Dattatreya, general secretary of the BJP's Andhra unit, is such a changed man why did we protect

At the Sriragur conclave (l to r) Jyoti Basu, Farooq Abdullah, Chandrabab Naidu, NTR and Syed Mir Qasim



NTR? Only because we thought he was different from the Congress(I). But look at him now. When he needed our help, he was crawling before us. But with a large majority, he has decided to cast us all aside."

The conscience-keepers of NTR suggest that it is the opposition that has drifted away from the chief minister. But the opposition leaders vehemently oppose such a view. Why, they ask, should they part with NTR? What have they to gain from it? The Congress(I) might have an axe to grind but what will the non-Congress(I) opposition, which has supported NTR all through, gain by criticising NTR? As it is, they cannot in the wildest of their dreams hope to replace NTR, for they neither have a political base nor a well-organised machinery in Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, the opposition have made it clear that they are not hankering for a share in the government. As Bandaru Dattatreya put it, the non-Congress(I) opposition parties had turned critics of NTR not by choice but by compulsion. For a long time these parties had chosen to keep silent about the failures of the NTR government on various fronts. First they gave him the benefit of the doubt for he was new to politics and then held themselves back for there seemed no better alternative to him in the state. They only hoped NTR would realise his follies in good time.

There came a time when these leaders began warning NTR of the fallout of his policies and criticised his style of functioning. But the chief minister turned a deaf ear to them. The NTR who always seemed eager for the counsel of more experienced friends in politics began rebuking them in a manner most humiliating. In the all-party meetings that he used to hold from time to time, NTR made the non-Congress(I) opposition parties sit along with the Telugu Desam. On the opposition side there was only the Congress(I), giving an impression that all parties other than the Congress(I) were party to whatever NTR did. And in these meetings, NTR would attack his allies, blame them for not cooperating with him, as if they were his own party members.

After two such meetings, the opposition decided to part with the Telugu Desam. They would rather sit in the opposition camp even if it placed them in the uneasy company of the Congress(I). "We had to let NTR know that we were not going to be a party to his new policies. In the months since the Assembly elections, he has only been aping the Congress(I)," remarked an opposition leader

The CM's Dictatorial Ways

NTR has always been known as an arrogant, short-tempered man, given to highhandedness. In the initial months of his rule this trait was overlooked in the mass euphoria—not only in Andhra Pradesh but at the national level too—his historic victory over the Congress(I) had created. But gradually, as NTR strengthened his position, these tendencies of his came to the fore. Perhaps, the first



N.T. Rama Rao

picture of the "real NTR" was revealed in a case concerning one of his own legislators, Bagidi Gopal, who resisted the admission of NTR's son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu into the Telugu Desam in 1983 and was expelled from the party in return. Gopal was then served with anonymous threats to his life and so terrified was he that during that period he never came out of his room in the new MLAs'

hostel in Hyderabad for days on end. Immediately following the B.Gopal incident came the non-gazetted officers' (NGO) strike—NTR's first test. NTR had, in one go, retrenched more than 40,000 government officials by reducing the retirement age from 58 to 55. When there were protests, he retaliated by levelling sweeping allegations against the bureaucracy, likening them to plunderers. Provoked, the civil servants then came out with allegations against NTR himself. "This man thinks he is the Nizam of Hyderabad and we his puny servants," one senior officer remarked.

NTR had to admit defeat on the retirement issue but subsequent successes at the hustings have only emboldened him. His officers resent his arrogance. K.Rosaiah, prominent Congress(I) leader of the state says, "We had sent a delegation to meet NTR and we were shocked to see the way he behaved with even the chief secretary. Almost as if we were his *chapas*." Just recently, during a meeting with officials, the chief minister flung a file at the education secretary, V.P.Rama Rao, injuring his nose. The education secretary is, incidentally, tipped to be the next chief secretary of Andhra Pradesh. Officials, understandably, are afraid to go on record about the treatment the chief minister gives them but make it amply clear that NTR is the kind of "tyrant one seldom comes across." One of the reasons, in fact, of the repeated failures of NTR on the administrative front has been that he has never been able to carry the bureaucracy along with him.

This dictatorial streak is even more evident when it comes to his own party. While MLAs and ministers dare not say a word against the diktats of NTR and his henchmen like Chandrababu Naidu, even Telugu Desam Members of Parliament cower in the presence of NTR. When the chief minister is in Delhi, one can often see all the 28 Telugu Desam Lok Sabha members, dressed in yellow shirts and white trousers (or *dhotis* in some cases) lined up neatly at the Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, waiting for NTR like schoolboys awaiting an inspection by the principal.

Sanjiv Kumar, Hyderabad

The Son-in-law Rises

Chandrababu Naidu has emerged as one of the most powerful men in Andhra Pradesh today, perhaps second only to NTR. Party MPs and MLAs take instructions from him and ministers dare not defy him. NTR himself does not take any decision without consulting Babu, as he is called. A powerful man, who is not accountable to anyone, Chandrababu Naidu neither holds a post in the government nor a position in the Telugu Desam Party. His writ goes unchallenged simply because the tall, dark man is the chief minister's son-in-law. Babu has not only taken over as the *de facto* chief of the Telugu Desam but has also replaced P. Upendra as the main political adviser of NTR. So much so that NTR finds the going difficult when Babu is not at his side. In the political circles of Hyderabad Babu is known as the power behind the throne. It is common knowledge that any work once approved by Babu can be easily accomplished.

How much say he has in matters of state was demonstrated only recently: chief minister N.T. Rama Rao caused quite a flutter in political and official circles of Hyderabad when at a press conference in the first week of July he appeared to be totally ignorant of the controversial sales tax ordinance passed only a day before by the Governor, Shankar Dayal Sharma. When newsmen raised questions about it, NTR blinked his eyes and asked: "What ordinance are you talking about?" Details of the ordinance which levied sales tax on pickles, puffed rice and other paddy products, were furnished and

NTR retorted: "No, no. We are not people who levy taxes on *murmura* (puffed rice) and chutneys." It were NTR's secretaries who finally came to his rescue saying that the ordinance had in fact been passed. Later, a clarification was issued to counter the impression that the chief minister was unaware of the ordinance.

But what had actually happened? It was clear at the press conference that NTR did not know much about the affair. Or perhaps he had forgotten about it. According to the grapevine in the official circles of Hyderabad, the ordinance was actually lying on Chandrababu Naidu's table and had got mixed up with some papers. It lay there till one day Naidu accidentally found it and rushed it to the Governor. The Governor signed it but by this time NTR and his cabinet had forgotten all about the ordinance!

It is ironical that NTR, who rose to power on the anti-Congress(I) platform, has depended politically on people trained in the Congress(I) school of politics. First it was Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, his former finance minister, who stabbed him in the back last August to capture power, albeit for a short period. The second is Chandrababu Naidu, another product of the Andhra Congress culture. Chandrababu has been in politics much longer than NTR and is known to have honed his skills at manipulation and manoeuvring. He comes from a modest family of Naravaripalli village in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Naidu joined the Congress more than a decade ago and rose to become the minister for cinema-

tography in the T. Anjaiah government. He was a key member of the Congress(I) when NTR first contested the polls late in 1982. He campaigned fiercely against his father-in-law, and accompanied the then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi to all her meetings in the state. When the Congress(I) lost, Chandrababu quickly changed loyalties and jumped on to the NTR bandwagon. His entry into the Telugu Desam was stiffly resisted by some members. But the son-in-law would not be ousted. Instead, B. Gopal, a Telugu Desam legislator who led the intra-party campaign against Naidu, was thrown out of the party.

Although he wielded influence right from the very time of his entry, Naidu first saw his chance when NTR was temporarily ousted in August last year. Apart from playing a role in NTR's comeback, Naidu also used the opportunity to "teach NTR some basic lessons in the art of politics." Since then, NTR has always depended on him; what is more, he has vested him with powers that have provoked some embarrassing questions from the opposition and caused a lot of indignation among the party rank and file. Chandrababu Naidu's highhandedness has led to large-scale discontent in the party and already a dissident faction of the Telugu Desam is beginning to take root. The question they are asking NTR is: Why is a man who represents the Congress(I) culture and who has no *locus standi* either in the party or the government, being allowed to dictate terms?

Sankarshan Thakur, Hyderabad

The Assembly elections in March 1985 placed NTR and his Telugu Desam in an invincible position: the TDP bagged 202 seats in a House of 294 members. It was a mandate that left NTR with no challengers. During this time, he inducted a new set of advisers led by Chandrababu Naidu, his son-in-law. Naidu is a known hardliner, who cares little for the opinion of others and adamantly pursues what he feels is right. It was after the Assembly elections that NTR closed the door on the opposition. The consultations he used to hold with them from time to time were suddenly discontinued. Chandrababu Naidu had replaced them all. Lamented CPI leader N. Giri

Prasad, "NTR has stopped taking the opposition into confidence. He holds no meetings, does not call a full session of the Assembly, does not even talk to personal friends in the opposition." NTR himself does not disagree with such a remark. He dismisses the opposition with a wave of his hand. "I am not concerned with them (see interview)." Such an attitude, say political observers in Andhra Pradesh, is due to the influence of Chandrababu Naidu and his supporters who now surround NTR. They have convinced him that he need not worry about what the opposition says or does since he has a comfortable majority in the Assembly.

In the changed circumstances, the non Congress(I) parties have found it necessary to restate their position. They are clarifying their stance, lest they be mistaken as party to NTR's changed policies. They are criticising him almost everyday. The CPI and the CPI(M) proclaimed that NTR's government has launched a series of anti-people measures, while the BJP held the chief minister guilty for the financial and administrative mess in the state. The Janata Party felt that NTR had almost stepped into the shoes of the Congress(I). They all seemed to agree that the NTR they had known and supported was only an illusion now. Not only has NTR gone back on some major policies



NTR with President Zail Singh during the latter's visit to Hyderabad recently

and popular programmes of his party and government, he has also in recent months adopted policies that were quite unpalatable to his erstwhile allies.

The mid day meal scheme for school children was one of the most popular programmes of the NTR government. It was withdrawn on the plea that the scheme was not being properly implemented which is only a reflection on the NTR government's inefficiency. On another occasion NTR had promised the people of Andhra Pradesh that his government would construct two lakh houses for the poor every year. Suddenly after the Assembly elections, this programme was revised and the number of houses to be constructed brought down to less than one and a quarter lakhs. What was more, the subsidy granted to people under the scheme was cut down to half. And in the last few weeks the government, through ordinances, has imposed new taxes worth about a hundred crore rupees. Interestingly, sales tax was imposed

on such items as pickles, puffed rice, sugar, candy, cheese and other paddy by products. All the opposition parties criticised this levy as it would hit only the poor people of Andhra Pradesh.

The issuing of ordinances—more than a dozen when the Assembly session is so close—is another sore point with the opposition. Most of them felt that NTR was doing such a thing because he wanted to avoid heated debates in the Assembly.

What has compelled NTR to go on a new fund raising venture is the utter financial mess Andhra Pradesh is in today. Such is the condition that NTR has had to order the disconnection of extra telephone lines in various district headquarters. And all government vehicles on duty in the districts have been grounded in the collectors' offices. NTR says he has done this because he does not want to waste public money, the reality perhaps, is that his government is in no position to foot the bills. The state BJP leadership has in fact, alleged

that through sheer mismanagement the NTR government has run out of money. Alleged Bandaru Dattatreya.

The situation is quite unprecedented. The exchequer is exhausted. They have not released money for projects that were announced months back and they are paying the salaries only with great difficulty.

While on the one hand NTR is grappling with a financial crisis, on the other hand his party is busy centralising power. An ordinance was issued delinking the appointments to grade IV services in the governments from the state Public Service Commission (PSC). Instead the appointments will now be made by a district selection committee which will comprise the zilla parishad chief—a political man—two other officials and two MLAs of the Telugu Desam. Similarly, another ordinance removed elected representatives from syndicates of six major universities in the state. In the

new arrangement the syndicates will consist of five members appointed by the government and four other ex officio members. Both steps are blatant bids to enhance the influence of the Telugu Desam and to politicise the services. Both the decisions have been criticised by the opposition, which sees it as an anti-democratic usurpation of power by a party

which, ironically, raised its voice against the 'suffocation of democracy in the state by the Congress(I)'

There are other reasons for which NTR is under attack. His sons own a huge plot of land in Nacharam in Hyderabad. Sometime ago NTR constructed an ashram here and shifted residence. But perhaps he did not like the place so he had another

ashram constructed at Gandipet, some 30 kilometres from Hyderabad, and went to live there. At Nacharam, NTR's sons decided to build a film studio. Then suddenly one day, it was announced that the Nacharam land had been exempted from the purview of the urban Land Ceiling Act. Two officials of the urban land ceiling department had objected to the exemption but they were overruled by no less an authority than the state cabinet. Yet, the Andhra Pradesh home minister Vasantha Nageshwara Rao maintained that the chief minister had not taken any personal decision. He went on to defend the exemption asking why a chief minister's son could not run a business! Another case concerning land—this time a 1,000-acre plot adjoining the Nagajunsagar Lake in Hyderabad. This huge plot was granted to Mahesh Yogis Veda Vignana Viswa Vidya Peetham last July just before NTR was unseated by Nandamuri Bhaskar Rao. The allegation is that the grant of the land involved 'improper and corrupt motives.' A commission headed by Justice M. Krishna Rao is now conducting an enquiry into the affair.

And then there are, of course, the creations of his own political ineptitude. After two and a half years in office, NTR has still not come to grips with matters of administration. He continues to quarrel with the bureaucracy for petty reasons (he recently hit the education secretary with a file, hurting him on the nose, and later had to apologise). He is still hasty with decisions and moody. In fact, his personal behaviour has cost him dearly. Year before last, in one stroke, he had removed more than 40,000 officials from service by reducing the retirement age from 58 to 55. He later had to reverse the decision and now all those retrenched in 1983 are being reabsorbed. NTR's decision did nothing except create bad blood between him and the bureaucracy and unsettled the entire administrative machinery.

In the first week of July NTR made his fifth visit to New Delhi after the Assembly elections. In none of his five visits had he met any opposition leader. All his time in New Delhi was spent exclusively with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his ministerial colleagues at the centre. It was very different from the time when NTR was the rallying point of the national opposition. NTR in those days was approached for every problem. Or he would fly down to New Delhi just for consultations with his 'brothers in the opposition' or simply for an hour-long meeting with members of the opposition parties. He, along

Is the Honeymoon Over?



NTR (left) with Ramoji Rao, editor of *Eenadu*

Perhaps nobody has campaigned for NTR the way *Eenadu*—the largest selling Telugu daily of Andhra Pradesh—and later *Newstime*, the English daily of the same group, have done. *Eenadu* was believed to have played a leading role in NTR's thumping victory in the 1983 Assembly elections. Strident in its criticism of the Congress rulers of the state, unequivocal in its advocacy of Telugu Desam, *Eenadu* had gone all the way with NTR. Again, in August-September 1984, when NTR was ousted for a while, *Eenadu* and *Newstime* clamoured for his reinstatement. Such was the support lent by the group to NTR and his party that an impression gained ground that *Eenadu* and *Newstime* were the official mouthpieces of the Telugu Desam. The popular belief was that Ramoji Rao, chairman of the group and the chief editor of *Eenadu* and *Newstime*, was committed to supporting NTR, come what may. The impression, it seems, was unfounded. Of late, there has been a discernible change in the tone of the two newspapers, much to the surprise of some media watchers. They are now

leaving no opportunity to expose the chinks in NTR's armour. One of the recent editorials, in fact, called him a "power hungry sanyasi."

The unqualified support of the group to NTR in 1983 had been beneficial for both parties. While NTR got a voice in the media, circulation figures of *Eenadu* soared in the wake of the NTR euphoria. But the honeymoon was not to last long. "We could not go on supporting any and every policy of NTR. We are an independent group. We judge things on merit," said an insider at *Eenadu*, explaining the recent attacks the newspaper has made on the NTR government. But he did agree that the policy on NTR had been the subject of many a debate during editorial meetings. "In the end," he said, "we came to two conclusions. Ours is not an official paper of the Telugu Desam and NTR is genuinely not performing well now; he has gone off the track." NTR, in the last few months, has lost many a friend. *Eenadu* and *Newstime* perhaps top that list.

Sanjivan Thakur, Hyderabad.

with Dr Farooq Abdullah, the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, took the lead in the era of conclave politics.

The short duration when NTR was out of power last August was another glorious period of partnership between the opposition and NTR. Then came restoration and the elections. And perhaps flushed with his thumping victory in the Assembly elections, NTR felt that he was cut out for greater things than the leadership of Andhra Pradesh. His decision to enter national politics with the launching of the Bharat Desam has contributed to NTR's alienation from the national opposition. NTR wanted all opposition parties to come together under the banner of Bharat Desam. He asked for too much. Why would any opposition party want to lose its identity for a new one led by NTR? And what concept did NTR have of Bharat Desam? Where was the basis



P. Upendra

for it? How would it function? NTR is still not clear about what he means when he talks of Bharat Desam. Even in his mind, it remains a nebulous concept. Twice its launching was announced and both times it failed to take off. NTR is certain he will be able to launch Bharat Desam in October, during the Mahanadu—a general session of all wings of the Telugu Desam. But who will join it? In how many states will it function? NTR does not know. His insistence that the national opposition parties will join the Bharat Desam was almost an affront to opposition leaders. They ignored NTR's overture and this time it came as an affront to NTR. Their relationship soured when NTR began to openly woo the central leadership. In the state he stopped talking to the opposition, in New Delhi he did not meet them at all. His attention is now focussed on Rajiv

Lessons in Sycophancy

Gandipet is a hamlet on the edge of a small lake some 30 kilometres from Hyderabad. It is here that NTR has built his new retreat—Shantikuteeram, a luxurious five room complex complete with an outhouse and servant quarters. NTR likes to call it an *ashram*. Beside Shantikuteeram, on a huge plot acquired recently by the Telugu Desam, has sprung up a much bigger complex consisting of an L shaped barrack with about 50 rooms. This is the new headquarters of the Telugu Desam built, says Tummala Chaudhari, who has supervised its construction, "in memory of the great victories of our party." Christened "Telugu Vijayam" the complex is currently being used as a school for training party cadres, students, youths and MLAs—they all take turns to come here to acquaint themselves with the party's "ideology." The school is a brainchild of Chandrababu Naidu and it is he who runs it. "Our aim," he says "is to build up people who have a sense of commitment and a degree of honesty in them. That is what they are taught here." There are some who disagree with Naidu. They liken it to an academy of "fascists."

A ten day camp for college students was in progress when this correspondent visited Gandipet. About three dozen students had responded to the Telugu Desam's state wide appeal. There were half a dozen instructors, all in mustard yellow shirts and white trousers. Even Chandrababu Naidu was similarly clad. The students held plastic folders containing party literature

In the course of the ten day camp, they would memorise it, sit for a test before "passing out." But at present they fell into a line and quietly walked up to a concrete dais constructed to the left of the barracks. There they split up into rows and, with a signal from one of the instructors, began raising slogans of 'NTR zindabad.' The slogans were followed by a Telugu song "Ma Telugu telli."

Once the song ended slogans were raised once again and then the students filed back to the barracks. "See how disciplined they are," exclaimed Chandrababu Naidu. "We want to make a break with the past. The camps will give birth to a different breed of politicians—committed, clean, independent." However, some students complained that there was no freedom of discussion, contrary to what Naidu maintained. "They keep telling us about NTR. They don't let us speak. This is the first day and I am already tired," said one inmate.

Two such camps—one for trade union members and another for women—have already been held. After the camp for students, there will be one for the youth followed by an "orientation camp" for party MLAs. They come in batches, follow a routine that begins at five in the morning and ends at nine at night. Apart from "NTRism" there is little to learn according to those who have attended these camps. "Telugu Vijayam" aims more at creating a generation full of admiration for NTR.

Sankarshan Thakur, Hyderabad

Gandhi—"brother Rajiv"—and his partymen. NTR's newfound love for the central Congress (I) leadership has not only irked the opposition but also created all manner of apprehensions in the Andhra Pradesh unit of the Congress(I).

NTR stands at the crossroads of his political career today. He knows full well that he has little or no influence outside his state and that his dreams of becoming a national leader have further receded with the ascent of a young Prime Minister in New Delhi. Meanwhile, he has lost a lot of confidence and goodwill of the opposition both in the state and on the national level, which has forced him to keep his options open with the Congress(I) leadership. It might be a

bit premature to say that NTR is going the MGR way. But as one of his own men in the Telugu Desam remarked: "Who would have known that one day the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu would be hand in glove with the Congress. They all started on the anti Congress anti centre platform and look where they have ended up." NTR has needed the support of the opposition—however insignificant its strength may be in Andhra Pradesh—to keep himself in power in the past (without that support N

Bhaskara Rao and the Congress(I) might have kept him away from power for a much longer time). Now NTR says he is not concerned about opposition parties. He sought assurance elsewhere.

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"Opposition Leaders Have Not Observed My Principles"

N.T.Rama Rao told SUNDAY

It was not one of those pre dawn interviews the Andhra Pradesh chief minister N T Rama Rao is so famous for granting. The appointment was fixed for half past five in the evening at NTR's 'camp residence' in Abids, a bustling commercial locality in the heart of Hyderabad. NTR sat in a room on the first floor, thickly carpeted and crammed with furniture. The meeting was brief. NTR ended it abruptly saying he had important work to attend to. But the change in him was obvious: his indifference towards the opposition, his reluctance to comment on the leadership in New Delhi. There is more one can gauge about NTR from his mannerisms—he always believes in using his historic talents. During this interview, Rama Rao was uncharacteristically subdued: not once did he raise his voice to assert his point, something that he does so often. Excerpts

Q You have visited New Delhi five times since the Assembly elections and not once have you met any opposition leader. Till sometime back you used to do so. Now you meet only leaders of the central government. Why?

A I have gone to New Delhi whenever I have felt the need to do so. The last time was when I had to meet Vishwanath Pratap Singh because I had to discuss certain matters regarding the financial condition of my state. There is nothing unusual about my visits. I go when work takes me there. Why should I unnecessarily bother them?

Q Why have you stopped meeting the opposition leaders?

A Why should I bother them unnecessarily? When there is an occasion I will meet them, not otherwise. They have not observed my principles. I had worked out a strategy for alignment in the elections but they did not implement it. Why should I bother them? I have more important things to attend to here.

Q There is a feeling that you are drifting towards the Congress(I).

A I do not know. What is your feeling? We are unchanged. We belong to the opposition. We are not pro Congress(I). We might be differ-

ent in our approach from other opposition parties. So what? We cannot implement their policies.

Q But parties that have all along supported you are now your critics. They say you have stopped seeking their advice and are following the same policies as the Congress(I) governments had.

A When it is necessary I shall call the opposition parties. I cannot call them everyday. They have begun criticising me on their own. Let them do so. The more they talk about me the more popular I shall become. And am I following the policies of the Congress(I)? Let me ask you one question: could the Congress do in 35 years what I have done in two years?

Q But you have withdrawn the mid day meal scheme which was one

When it is necessary I shall call the opposition. I cannot call them everyday. They have begun criticising me on their own. Let them do so. The more they talk about me the more popular I become.

of your main promises to the people.

A Yes, but we may start it again. We had to withdraw it because there were some problems. The scheme was being misused at the local level. My government will always be a philanthropic government but at the same time I cannot waste public money. As soon as we think we can run the scheme properly we shall start it again.

Q How is the financial position of the state? You seem to have taken several austerity measures recently. You have even ordered that extra telephone lines be cut and vehicles on government duty in the districts be stationed at the collector's office.

A The financial position is very good. In fact, the union finance

minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh complimented me on my success on the financial front. He praised me in high terms. It is true we have taken some measures to save money recently but that is only because I don't want public money to be squandered. Mine is a responsible government. I feel committed to the thousands of my brothers and sisters in the state. How can I waste their money just like that?

Q But your performance has been bad since the Assembly elections, isn't it?

A Who says? We are the first state to give scholarships to students. We have begun giving free uniforms and books for children in classes one and two. We are expanding the span of our irrigation network. Work is going ahead on the Telugu Ganga project on the Polavaram power station project. We want to establish another 250 megawatt thermal station in Ravalsem. In the last few years I have brought more discipline in the government. I have asked Rastogi of Maharashtra to make recommendations on streamlining the administration. My government is working very well. Now we are going to organise the mandals which will further decentralise the administration. We shall take the government to our villages, to every doorstep.

Q There is a feeling that you have suddenly changed your style of functioning after the Assembly elections. The fact that you have issued so many ordinances when the Assembly session is so near is being quoted as an example of this.

A I remain unchanged. There is nothing wrong in issuing ordinances; it is constitutionally justified. And I brought them because there were certain reasons. We have our priorities and we regulate our functioning accordingly. What is wrong? Let people say what they want.

Q Is the idea of Bharat Desam still alive with you?

A Very much. It shall come.

Q When?

A At the right time.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur

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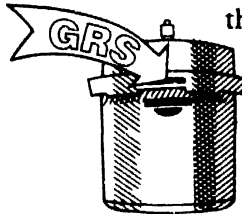
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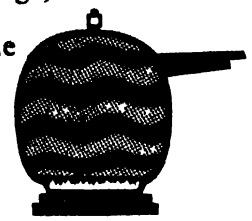
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Presidents and Prime Ministers

A History of Their Tensions

Is there a gulf between President Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi? Recent newspaper reports and statements by opposition leaders have suggested so. Apparently between June 1982 and June 1985 the relationship between Giani Zail Singh and Rajiv Gandhi have undergone a sea change. It was Rajiv Gandhi then a general secretary of the Congress(I) who had first conveyed to Giani Zail Singh the then union home minister that Mrs. Indira Gandhi wanted him to be the presidential candidate. This was on 8 June 1982, the formal announcement by the Congress(I) high command came a fortnight later. In June this year sources close to the President made no secret of the fact that Giani Zail Singh was feeling hurt not only because the Prime Minister was not consulting the President on the affairs of the state but had also not paid the usual courtesy visits to the Rashtrapati Bhavan before and after his foreign trip.

The transfer of J.S. Bindra, the bureaucrat whom Giani Zail Singh wanted to retain in his personal staff was seen as an open affront to the President Bindra whose tenure had expired was due to be rotated back to his parent state. But when the President of India on whose pleasure the government of India is run wants a particular person to be put on his personal staff an exception to the rule can be made. However despite the President being displeased J.S. Bindra was transferred out of Delhi.

According to stories circulating in the capital when Bindra was transferred, the President sent word to the Prime Minister desiring that the transfer be stalled. There was no reply from the Prime Minister's office. After a few days a parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister was approached. He refused to entertain the request for retaining Bindra in Delhi. Inaccessibility which has been the bane of most Congress(I) politicians, had affected the relations between the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Prime Minister's office.

The President and the Prime Minister have well defined roles under the Constitution of India. The President of India, under article 74

of the Constitution (as amended by the 44th amendment) is bound by the advice of the council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister. Of course the amended article provides for the President to have his own view on a matter. He can refer back a cabinet decision for reconsideration but if the cabinet vetoes the President's objections, he is bound by the collective wisdom of the council of ministers. The relationship between the Prime Minister and the President therefore allows scope for dis-

cussion between the two. Apart from article 74 there is another interesting provision article 78, which somehow has not been interpreted either by commentators or by the judiciary. This article provides that it shall be the duty of the Prime Minister to communicate to the President all decisions of the council of ministers relating to the administration of the union and the proposals for legislation. This article also provides that if the President calls for any specific information relating to the adminis-



Rajiv Gandhi and President Zail Singh exchange greetings after he was sworn in as PM



President Zail Singh (back to the camera), with Indira Gandhi

For deep Shalwa

tration or legislative proposals, then the Prime Minister is required to furnish the same. Furthermore if the President so desires, then he can ask the PM to refer to the council of ministers any decision taken by a minister which has not been discussed by the cabinet. Article 78 therefore, provides for the President of India the role of a watchdog over the affairs of state.

The importance of the council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister as embodied under article 74 is certainly supplemented by article 78, which defines the powers of the President vis a vis the decisions of the council of ministers. While the President is bound by the advice of the ministers, he also enjoys the right to question but not alter, the decisions of individual ministers as well as ministers collectively. So far the Rashtrapati Bhavan has not put

article 78 to use. If it decides to do so, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi would have no option but to furnish the details about the decisions taken during his visits abroad and other decisions of the government.

On 24 June, President Zail Singh undertook a journey to Bangalore by the air force's VIP plane Rajdoot. From there he flew by a helicopter to the district town of Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh, where his predecessor, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, is living a retired life. The ostensible purpose of his visit was to greet President Reddy on his "birth day." But the records have it that Neelam Sanjiva Reddy was born on 19 May and not 24 June. The thin veil put around the purpose of Giani Zail Singh's Anantpur trip was not difficult to penetrate. Amidst rumours that he was not being given due

respect in New Delhi, the President had gone to consult his predecessor (who had dealt with three Prime Ministers—Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Indira Gandhi) about his future course of action.

Significantly, in the same trip to the South the President also met B D Jatti, former vice president, who had acted as President of India in the crucial days of 1977 after the death of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Giani Zail Singh's discussions with these two statesmen have not been made public, but the grapevine had it that Giani Zail Singh was unhappy and wanted to quit. The differences between him and the executive head of the government which have existed since Operation Bluestar last year seem to be reaching a climax.

It is strange that Giani Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi should have fallen apart the way they are reported to have. If we recall the events of the fateful evening 31 October 1984, it would become apparent that Giani Zail Singh went out of his way to make Rajiv Gandhi the successor to Mrs Indira Gandhi. The President cut short his foreign trip and rushed back on hearing the news of the assassination. He went straight to the hospital from the airport and there he consoled Rajiv Gandhi and asked him to accompany him to the Rashtrapati Bhavan so that the new Prime Minister could be sworn in.

The Constitution is silent on the mode of selection of the Prime Minister. While the Prime Minister has to enjoy the support of the majority of the members of the Lok Sabha (there was no concept of 'party' in the Constitution till the recent anti-defection act) it is for the President to be satisfied that he enjoys such support. On 31 October Giani Zail Singh did not stand on formality. He recognised the need of the hour to maintain political stability and invited Rajiv Gandhi to be the Prime Minister, a decision which was later ratified by the Congress(I) Party in Parliament and given popular sanction during the general elections held in December 1984.

It can be argued that the Congress(I) parliamentary board had 'unanimously' selected Rajiv Gandhi—but the fact is that at the time when he was sworn in, of the five parliamentary board members, Mrs Gandhi lay dead, working president Kamalapati Tripathi and Mrs Margatham Chandrasekhar were rushing back to the capital, cutting short their respective tours and only two members, Pranab Mukherjee and P V Narasimha Rao, were present in the meeting which 'unanimously' decided in Rajiv

Gandhi's favour. As for the members of the Congress(I) Party in Parliament, totally oblivious of the swearing-in ceremony in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, 30 of the total of 505 members met under the chairmanship of the deputy leader, N.G. Ranga, in the central hall and passed a condolence resolution. The act of Giani Zail Singh in swearing in Rajiv Gandhi on 31 October 1984, therefore, was unprecedented. The President did take an initiative in making Rajiv Gandhi the Prime Minister after Indira Gandhi.

The choice of Giani Zail Singh as the presidential candidate had surprised many. As the candidate of the ruling party, during the campaign, he had shocked many when he stated in Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat, "If my leader (Mrs Gandhi) had said I should pick up a broom and be a sweeper I would have done that. She chose me to be the President." Till 1980 he was a leader of Punjab. Even as the union home minister between 1980 and mid-1982 he did not lose interest in Punjab politics. As President of India too, Punjab affairs have bogged the functioning of Giani Zail Singh. It is well known now that when he flew to Amritsar on 8 June 1984 after the Operation Blue Star, he did not do so with the consent of the executive head of the government.

Reports about differences between the head of state and the head of government, when published, are promptly denied. But this time we have it on the authority of the former President of India, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, that he had advised Giani Zail Singh not to resign. It is not possible for the press to ask the President if he wants to resign. But the very fact that the former President has asked him not to resign shows that the tensions of the office of the President have begun to tell on Giani Zail Singh.

Tension between the President and the Prime Minister has been a factor in India's political life from the days of stalwarts like President Rajendra Prasad and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Indira Gandhi and the learned scholar, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan too had differences. Even in the Janata days, Sanjiva Reddy first had differences with Morarji Desai and later with Charan Singh. But the differences between Giani Zail Singh and Rajiv Gandhi are more of a personal nature than ideological ones. If as a presidential candidate someone makes sweeping statements, then consequences like the present impasse are bound to follow.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

Past Tense



Jawaharlal Nehru (left) with Rajendra Prasad

Jawaharlal Nehru would have preferred Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as the first President of India. However, overwhelming opinion within the Congress being in Dr Rajendra Prasad's favour, the honour went to him. From the very beginning Dr Prasad and Nehru had differences of opinion, but this did not deter the first Prime Minister from calling on the President once a week. In the initial years of the functioning of the Constitution of India, Dr Prasad and Jawaharlal Nehru set certain healthy precedents. These, however, have been forgotten now. Between 30 March and 27 June this year the head of state and the head of government did not meet at all.

On 27 June, after completing his triumphant foreign tour, Rajiv Gandhi had a brief meeting with Giani Zail Singh but no special effort had been put in for the occasion. That day the Prime Minister was scheduled to go to the Rashtrapati Bhavan to attend the Asian Games awards function (where the "Asiad Jyoti" awards were distributed by the President). After the ceremony was over, while arrangements were being made to photograph the award winners with the President and the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi and Giani Zail Singh retired to the President's study for a brief meeting. Thus ended a three-month gap in meetings between the two.

In the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, not only did the Prime Minister call on the President every week, a convention had been set under which the vice-president of India, the comptroller and auditor general and the chairman of the union public service commission had regular visits to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Members of the council of ministers too called on the President to explain the functioning of their respective ministries. Many did not frown upon the idea that

the head of state should seek explanations from the ministers.

The position of the head of state in India cannot be compared to that of the British monarch, though the constitutional pundits have asserted time and again that the concept of "satisfaction" of the President of India is derived from the British "satisfaction of the crown." The British monarch's office is hereditary while the office of the President of India has so far been held by politicians. Though the interest shown by Giani Zail Singh in Punjab affairs is rather unusual, it may be unfair to expect an active politician to start behaving like the British monarch, totally aloof from politics, overnight after being sworn in as the President.

Jawaharlal Nehru not only called on the President regularly but also consulted him regarding the appointments of ministers. According to the disclosures made in a book written by Dr Rajendra Prasad's private secretary, Vahni Choudhary (who has relied upon a diary maintained by the first President of India), Nehru consulted Dr Prasad even on the nomination of the members of the Rajya Sabha. The appointments of state governors and ambassadors was also discussed between the President and the Prime Minister in the Nehru era. Not only this, at one stage when Nehru wanted to resign from the membership of the Congress Working Committee, he consulted Dr Rajendra Prasad.

The institution of the President of India remains the same. The only difference is that in the last few years, meetings between the President and the Prime Minister have become far and far between. That perhaps is the difference in the manner of Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya



A Royal Jordanian airliner blown up by hijackers at Beirut airport

A World Under Siege

Kanta Talukdar from Bonn reports on growing international terrorism

Beirut, 14 June A Trans World Airlines (TWA) Boeing 727 jet is hijacked to Beirut from Athens. 39 passengers who were taken hostage are released on 29 June

Frankfurt, 19 June An explosion rips through a passenger terminal at Frankfurt airport killing three persons including two children

Cork Island, 22 June An Air India Boeing 747 with 329 passengers and crew on board crashed into the Atlantic 180 kms off the Irish coast

Tokyo, 22 June A bomb explodes at the Narita airport killing two baggage handlers

June has been the month of the terrorists. After months of complacency the world was forced to confront the chilling realities of modern day terrorism: the bombings, hijackings, kidnappings or assassinations. It began in the mid Fifties with American airliners being increasingly hijacked to Cuba but once the US and Cuba had worked out a system where hijackers would not be given asylum, these incidents began to peter out.

The trend of hijacking aircrafts by guerrillas to coerce governments to meet their demands first gathered strength in the Middle eastern states. One of the first instances of hijacking occurred when three members of the Che Guevara commando

unit of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hijacked a US Boeing 707 jet airliner of TWA on 29 August 1969. The plane with 113 people on board was hijacked over southern Italy, en route to Israel from New York. The aircraft was taken over at Rome at gun point and was forced to fly to Damascus. Shortly after the plane landed, a bomb detonated by the hijackers, exploded in the pilot's cabin, after the passengers and crew were made to leave the aircraft by emergency chutes. On taking control of the aircraft over Italy, the hijackers claimed that the operation had been carried out because one of the passengers on board was "an assassin responsible for the death and misery

of many Palestinian men, women and children," and who would be brought before a "Palestinian revolutionary court" and tried for his "crimes." A PLFP statement, however, made no mention of the "assassin" but claimed that the Boeing had been seized as reprisal for the sale of 50 Phantom jet fighters by the US to Israel.

It was the PLO attack on the Munich Olympics in 1972 that first focussed world attention on how determined assassins could hold people and countries to ransom. The attack by the Japanese Red Army on Lod airport in Israel the same year and the Red Brigade's kidnapping and murder of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1979 highlighted the helplessness not only of individuals but also of nations. More recently there was the IRA attempt to wipe out the entire British cabinet at the Conservative Party conference in Brighton and the Beirut hostage crisis underlines the vulnerability of governments even of superpowers armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons.

Today things have become much more critical. Most western governments since the beginning of this year feel there has been a sinister new development in terrorism that coordinated and concerted attacks by different groups are taking place in European countries. To substantiate their point they mention intelligence reports which claim that representatives of all established European terrorist movements—with the exception of the IRA and some newly formed organisations—met in Lisbon last June and agreed to cooperate. On 23 August 1984 25 kilos of explosives were planted in a car outside the NATO building in Paris by Action Directe. But these did not explode. On 18 December a carload of 18 kilos of explosives planted by the Rote Armee Faktion (RAF), failed to go off outside the NATO military school in Bavaria, West Germany. On 14 January, a car bomb planted by a new Belgian terrorist group, Celules Communistes Combatantes (CCC), exploded near the NATO headquarters. What has intrigued and disturbed the authorities is that all three groups used explosives from the same source—816 kilos of plastic explosives which were stolen from Ecoussines in Brussels in June last year.

The terrorists also seem to have agreed on certain specific targets mainly against NATO or companies connected with the weapons' industry. The attacks seem to be coordinated, what with the terrorists sharing information, arms and cash. There is



Forensic experts sift through the rubble after the bomb blast at Frankfurt airport

also evidence that this new breed of terrorists, what the Germans call *die dritte generation*—the third generation—has learnt from the mistakes of its predecessors. They are better

organised and operate in small cells that are particularly difficult to infiltrate. Since the beginning of this year, over 60 attacks have been made in Europe alone, making internation



Shi'ite Muslim militiamen watch as the Jordanian jetliner is reduced to ashes

A School for Terrorists

Frank Camper, Jr. might look like an average 38-year-old American, but he has an extraordinary profession: in his "school," which lies on 30 acres of swamplands in Hueyville, Alabama, he trains men in techniques to bomb, sabotage, and assassinate. Recondo School is a guerrilla training camp and awards its "graduates"—200 in the last five years—not diplomas, but a black lightning-bolt patch. Among the school's recent "honour students," were at least four Sikhs by Mr Camper's own admission.

One was Lal Singh, the 25-year-old Sikh who has eluded the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since being charged two months ago with plotting to assassinate Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and has more recently been implicated in the explosion of Air India flight 182. Another was Sukwinder Singh, who now faces charges of attempting to assassinate Mr Bhajan Lal, chief minister of Haryana, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He and four other Sikhs will go on trial on 8 July, and Mr Camper is expected to be summoned as a star witness.

Frank Camper's training school in Alabama is described as a "24-hour battle ground" equipped with cannons, rocket launchers, weapons and explosives of every variety, and even simple mechanical devices made from metal rods and plumbing equipment which can snap a pipe in a chemical factory. At his training camp would-be terrorists learn to dodge live bullets and bombs, fight fellow students for booby-trapped food, torture their victims, hang a man in a silent assassination technique and raid a building, knocking down a door with explosives and spraying the interior with machinegun fire.

In a series of interviews with the *New York Post*, the self-styled guerrilla leader, a former Vietnam commando and operative for the Central Intelligence Agency and the FBI, claimed that some of his Sikh pupils are now "out there experimenting and playing around with the things they learned from me." One "experiment," he said, was an attempt to use his "poison technique" to "contaminate the water supply of a girls' school in India."

Men like Mr Camper tend to boast about their spicy military ventures and take responsibility for

the accomplishments of their students—what better way to drum up new clients? Mr Camper's descriptions appear to match neatly with information contained in court affidavits charging seven Sikhs in all with plots to assassinate political officials and overthrow the government of India. His interview with the *Post*, then has an air of credibility. The Sikhs, he said, contacted him through an advertisement in a paramilitary magazine. "Sikhs are getting training wherever they can get it," Mr Camper told the *Post*. "They don't have a central training area. They came here (to Recondo School) to train a cadre to go out and set up other training camps."

"They even sought out professional terrorists to help them," Mr Camper elaborated. He refused to

"They (Ammand Singh, Lal Singh and others) left knowing everything they need to know for sheer terror. There are more than 20 targets ... I am afraid a lot of innocent people could lose their lives."—Frank Camper

name the "professionals," but said they were "world class terrorists of the sort that can teach sophisticated bomb timers." Without flinching, but with obvious allusion to Air India flight 182, Mr Camper said, "(The Sikhs) even wanted to blow up a plane." He described the Sikhs as "highly dedicated warriors who are extremely determined and well organised for their aims." They have learned, he said, how to handle explosives, bomb timers, weapons, evasion, and sabotage.

In the interview, Mr Camper appeared to have some compunctions about training men to attack civilians. "I teach warfare in every imaginable way, but if I ever catch any of my former students in acts of terrorism, I will shoot them without a word." He claims that he filed

with the FBI and CIA a detailed intelligence report about the blueprint for terrorist acts which he and one of the instructors at Recondo School drew up for the Sikhs. The instructor, Mr Camper claimed, was Thomas Norris, the undercover agent whom Gurpratap Singh Birk, leader of those who wanted to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi, contacted in search of a "hitman" to assassinate Bhajan Lal.

For the terrorist blueprint, copies of which have reportedly been shared with Indian intelligence authorities, the four "charter generals" of the Sikhs paid 10,000 dollars in cash, plus a retainer, according to the *Post*. The blueprint contained manuals for attacks on civilians in New York, Toronto, Vancouver, parts of California and London and a "hit list" of restaurants, banks and business houses along a strip in Jackson Heights, New York. The terrorist blueprint was supposed to be recovered by agents of the FBI, but they bungled an attempt to raid a Sikh terrorist training ground in New Jersey on 4 May, the day New Orleans police rounded up four Sikhs lingering outside Mr Lal's hotel, according to the *New York Post*.

Part of Mr Camper's contract, the guerrilla trainer said, was to set up the New Jersey base—a ten-acre site with three buildings in the northwest hills of the state in the town of Columbia plus another one in upstate New York. In late April, FBI agents put the property under surveillance, and on 3 May, watched as 20 Sikhs began arriving by car late that night. The local police were informed by the FBI that "an operation was to go down" in the area. But in New Orleans on 4 May cab driver Jatwinder Singh Ahluwalia slipped out of police hands and called the New Jersey camp to warn his comrades. Mr Ahluwalia was later arrested, but the others in Columbia fled.

Referring to the four Sikhs who received training at Recondo School, Mr Camper told the *Post*, "They left knowing everything they need to know for sheer terror. There are more than 20 targets in New York, Toronto, London and California," he said. "I am afraid a lot of innocent people could lose their lives."

Sharon Butler, Washington

al terrorism one of the major issues of discussion at all international political meetings. The last four summits of the world's seven industrialised nations had communiques on terrorism. At the recent meeting of the European Justice Ministers in Edinburgh it was stated "The battle against terrorism is absolutely top priority." But as the Indian government recently discovered to its chagrin that foreign governments are unwilling to take up strong measures against some of the provocative and possibly dangerous elements among immigrant communities. It is important to note that by adopting such an attitude, members of the European community have hampered the fight against international terrorism.

A glance at the problems bedeviling Franco-Italian relations will illustrate the point. Only a few months back the Italian Prime Minister, Bettino Craxi, openly accused France of adopting "a somewhat rigid if not openly negative attitude towards" Italy's outstanding 120 requests for the extradition of suspected Italian terrorists living in France. While France vehemently denies "harbouring multinational terrorists capable of striking throughout Europe," French spokesmen say that their policy is that all who had committed violent bloody crimes or were accused of aiding and abetting such crimes could be extradited provided there was sufficient evidence to support the charges. However, France says that of the ten cases only a few have adequate evidence. A similar case is made against the French by the Spanish authorities who frequently accuse the French of harbouring Basque separatists. At the root of the problem is the contradictory policies that France has adopted: that of eradicating terrorism and its principle of giving asylum to political refugees.

Such conflicting attitudes in countries professing to fight terrorism hamper the fight against it. It might, as in the case of Belgium, be that the government chooses to ignore terrorism while condemning it. Until a few months ago the Belgian government gave little thought to the issue of terrorism as long as it was not made the target of terrorist attacks and was therefore a haven for terrorists on the run. With the emergence of a terrorist group, the CCC, Belgium is paying for its slackness. The attacks by the CCC on the NATO headquarters took the government completely by surprise. Brussels in the earlier part of the year was a city under siege, and random road block-

Tightening Security

With two million passengers flying everyday, there is a limit to the measures that can be imposed without bringing international air traffic to a grinding halt. Vigilance of airport security staff is vital and very often the crucial point is that of motivating people who consider their job boring. Modern aircraft liners are particularly susceptible to a determined terrorist bomber. The hold on a typical trans-Atlantic jumbo flight contains 500 suitcases, usually unchecked by airport security staff. On the tarmac, the plane is easily accessible to dozens of ground staff and, possibly, a saboteur. The cabin of the aircraft is open to cleaners during stopovers and the caterers who deliver the food. In future the 350 passengers on a jumbo should all have their hand baggage properly X-rayed and their bodies screened by metal detectors. There are, of course, hundreds of thousands of flights which do not face any problem but require only a few seconds of complacency for the gruesome act of a terrorist to be successful.

One new development on the market which promises to help security personnel is a sensitive electronic device. It can detect alcohol in factory-sealed bottles and nitro-glycerine in packaged explosives, detecting one part in a trillion. Its findings are instantly analysed and read out on a computer screen with, if necessary, an audible alarm to warn of alcohol, cannabis or TNT. A lorry could move into the X-ray building where the X-ray is so powerful that it can detect guns, ammunition and bottles hidden in a roll of a carpet or a refrigerator. It can also see through the parts of a car, including the petrol slopping in the tank. While hand baggage can be relatively easily checked, checking freight is time-consuming, and open to error. This equipment which can check the freight of 20 lorries per hour or 40 ship containers or 100 tonnes of air cargo costs ten million pounds to install, one seventh of the price of a jumbo which is not much considering the numerous lives which are at stake.

Kanta Talukdar, Bonn

to catch terrorists are a regular feature of life now. Many other countries felt that they had their terrorists defeated. Complacency had crept in. At least this was the case in West Germany, when last year the police were able to get hold of the plans for attacks and lists of targets from members of the RAF who were arrested. Though Dr Zimmermann, president of West Germany's Space and Aeronautical Federation was on the hit list nothing was done to protect him. A few months later he was shot dead in his house by terrorists.

The recent spate of terrorist activity has created worldwide awareness of the fact that many terrorists have regrouped and are spoiling for another round and that there must be international cooperation to defeat the menace. An Air India official said that now there are chances that the Indian government's requests for extra vigilance and clamping down on the extremists active in Western countries might be taken more seriously. Part of this vigilance could take the form of more cooperation between governments and their intelligence units and more exchange of information.

The recognition that modern ter-

rorism is a transnational phenomenon and the awareness of the need to plug loopholes, which allow terrorist crimes to be exempted from extradition treaties, has finally set in. Just a day after the AI Jumbo disaster the US and UK agreed to sign a supplementary extradition treaty denying political defence for "fugitives accused or convicted of certain serious offences of violence." This includes the case of Mr Docherty, a member of the provisional IRA, who escaped from jail days before he was to be sentenced to life imprisonment for murder. He won his case in the US last year against extradition, on the grounds that his crime was political. Other successful defences have been mounted against extradition by IRA terrorists, including many persons wanted for murder and bombing charges. These cases have angered many Britons and the new deal will cover all violent offences including hijacking, taking hostages and murder. Similar treaties should be made by various countries to counter the specific threat posed by international terrorism.

The events at Tokyo's Narita airport, which is nicknamed "fortress" by airline personnel and the bomb explosion at Frankfurt airport which

Murder in the Air

A loud bang, sharp cracking noise, the wail of a human being—these were the sounds emitted during the last few moments by Air India's doomed Kanishka, recorded at Shannon air control in Ireland, before the jumbo jet with 329 people on board became the latest victim of the Khalistani terrorists operating from Canada.

A high level team of investigators headed by the secretary of the ministry of civil aviation and tourism, Dr S S Sidhu, Capt B K Bhasin, director, flight safety, Indian Airlines, and the director general of civil aviation, air marshal Rajee on their return from Cork (Ireland) said that on the basis of the evidence collected so far it was a clear case of sabotage.

Experts belonging to international

the aircraft and threw the huge aircraft out of control. It is believed that due to the failure of all controls—electronic, hydraulic and manual—all efforts of the captain and the co-pilot to steady the aircraft failed.

Explaining the recordings of the last sounds from the aircraft, the experts said that the VHF (very high frequency transmitter) must have been activated by one of the pilots which conveyed the happening in the cockpit for 5.2 seconds to the Shannon air control. The sound spectrum of the recordings analysed by the Royal Air Force establishment at Farnborough has shown that it contained a muffled bang, a human shriek and some cracking noises.

The Shannon airport was in con-

even a word from the pilots. There are many safety systems available on the Boeing 747 aircraft. The manufacturers claim that the aircraft is so sturdy that even in the event of failure of all the four engines it could glide for half an hour.

The autopsy of the victims recovered so far, as well as the analysis of the injuries, support the theory of a mid-air explosion since most of the injuries had been sustained before the bodies hit the water. The headless body of one of the passengers strengthened the belief that the aircraft broke up in mid-air.

The damage caused to the aircraft was so sudden and massive that even the gas masks which are placed overhead and meant to fall automatically in the event of decompression failed to operate. The bottles stuffed with oxygen were found broken. The investigators are not ruling out the possibility of terrorists infiltrating the security arrangements of Air India at Montreal.

The cold-blooded murder of 329 innocent people has shocked the world and international agencies related to aviation security are trying to find out a way which could prevent hijacking and spot explosives or dangerous weapons hidden in the luggage hold of the aircraft. The managing director of Air India, D Bose, said all efforts were being made to trace a passenger who had booked a seat on this flight as also on the Canadian Pacific flight to Tokyo.

The theory that an explosion destroyed flight 182 was further strengthened with the explosion in the cargo container of a Canadian Pacific Airways flight which landed at Tokyo's Narita airport. Yet another blast took place at Rome airport again in the cargo container.

The world intelligence agencies, with cooperation from the Canadian authorities, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and others are looking for Ammand Singh and Lal Singh, the two clean-shaven Sikhs from Canada alleged to be the brain behind the Kanishka explosion. The American intelligence authorities were also looking for them in connection with a plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi during his visit to America last June.

By a Special Correspondent, New Delhi



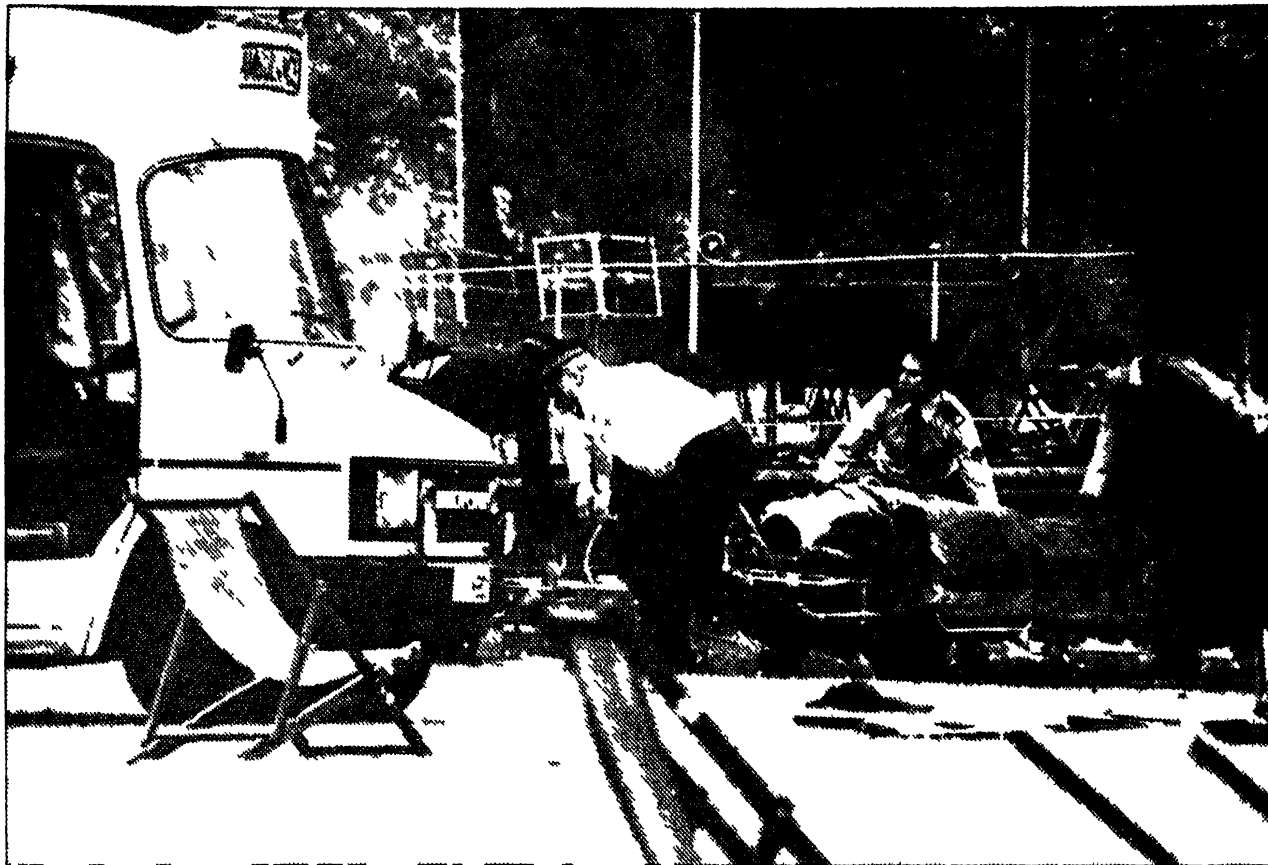
A grief-stricken relative being consoled at Palam airport, New Delhi

al agencies as well as the Indian team had come to the conclusion on the basis of the clues available that a bomb was planted in the bulk-head of the aircraft which triggered off the explosion over the Atlantic Ocean. The jumbo was flying at an altitude of 31,000 feet and cruising at a speed of 700 kms per hour. Talking to SUNDAY, one of the investigators reconstructed the events preceding the crash.

According to one theory, the bomb was either in a box of one of the London-bound passengers or was planted in the bulk-head of the cargo section at Montreal. This spot is next to the electronic bay and exactly under the first class cabin. When the explosion took place at 31,000 feet it completely destroyed the electronic bay—the brain—of

stant touch with the aircraft from the time it entered Irish air space. The cockpit transponder kept emitting electronic signals to the ground station giving the flying time, direction of flight, speed and altitude till seven seconds past 7:10 am local time (12:55 IST). There was no contact for 20 seconds and the ground station knew that there was something wrong with the plane. It was seen on the radar screen till that time and then suddenly disappeared.

Within minutes it was known that the aircraft had crashed into the Atlantic Ocean. The explosion theory is supported by a number of factors: the total failure of the controls, no communication from the cockpit, no mayday signal, not



Rescue operations in progress at Cork Island after the recent Air India disaster

has the reputation of being one of the most security conscious in the world show that terrorism can be contained but not eliminated. The maniac is ever present keeping a keen eye open for the negligent security attendant, the defective machine or that one moment of inattentiveness or complacency. But just as the terrorists are exploiting high technology to meet their ends, security personnel should take stringent steps against these madmen (see box).

Another way of defeating international terrorism is by holding steadfast and not giving in to their demands, regardless of whether the airport under siege is Madras, Beirut or Larnaca. It is easy to be cynical about international measures against terrorism. Though over 100 countries signed the treaty of Hague in 1970 which calls for the punishment or extradition of hijackers, many failed to observe it. This could make the crucial difference. There should be no knuckling under terrorist pressure. Terrorists and saboteurs should be made to feel the risks of their obsessions, so as to deter further hijackings, murders and kidnappings. A concession to hijackers today would be a disaster for others tomorrow. Only a carefully planned

global package deal can help contain this menace of modern times. For it is not just the aircraft and its passengers that are at risk. Remember the hijacking of the train by Moluccan terrorists a couple of years ago in Holland? An important way would of course be to follow an objective long-term policy and to evolve political solutions to the problem, wherever possible. This applies especially to Lebanon and Beirut, the hot beds of terrorism today. But there will always be a group of people who will remain dissatisfied, unable to gain their aims by democratic means, and ready to resort to the weapons of terror.

Despite the recent wave of terrorism, there can be little doubt that the battle against terrorists is being won. For example, between 1969 and 1981 there were 52 cases of bombs exploding on board planes and 685 people were killed. In the years between 1977 and 1981 only seven deaths occurred. Although 1985 is a particularly bad year in terms of security measures, the sinister development of international cooperation among terrorists is possibly a sign of their weakening hold. The various groups have been pushed towards a merger because they are too weak by

themselves. Or take the arrest of top Italian terrorist Barbara Balzamani, who was sought for the abduction and murder of former Italian Premier Moro in 1978. It took the police seven years but they have got her now. As IATA officials discussed anti-terrorist measures in Montreal, attended by the civil aviation ministers of the US and UK, the Milan summit communique has shown the renewed determination of Europe to defeat terrorism. The aims include an agreement not to sell arms to any state which gives refuge to terrorists, a better exchange of information between security forces and the extradition of terrorists.

The disaster of Air India's flight 182 was, if caused by a bomb, the worst case of international air terrorism. But it is also the first case of spontaneous cooperation between governments over three continents. Indeed, it was a unique space-based surveillance system, combining Soviet and American satellites with French and Canadian instruments that had helped lead rescuers to the wreckage of the Jumbo jet. It might just be the beginning of more effective international cooperation to fight the global roller coaster of terrorism.

Congress (I) MP in Bank Fraud

An investigation into how a member of the ruling party is getting rich by manipulating bank loans

While the government still gloats over the arrest of the London based high profile financial juggler, Rajendra Sethia, there are dozens of Sethias playing their games under its very nose. The government is definitely not oblivious of them, but has decided to conveniently look the other way. How else can the attitude of the centre towards Progressive Constructions the Hyderabad based organisation of K Sambasiva Rao Congress(I) Member of Parliament from Machilipatnam and AICC(I) joint secretary, be described? For years the company has liberally spent the funds of several nationalised banks and financial institutions violating every conceivable norm.

The company's activities have been discussed even in Parliament. But not only has the government studiously avoided taking any action against the firm, it has also ignored the demand for "a fair and impartial enquiry" into its activities.

The ways in which Progressive Constructions and its 40 odd affiliate companies have hoodwinked banks, such as the Andhra Bank, Corporation Bank, Industrial Development Bank of India, State Bank of India, Syndicate Bank, Indian Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of Maharashtra and even the Reserve Bank of India are ingenious in their variety and simplicity. If Rajendra Sethia gave fictitious letters of credit (LC) against which he obtained loans from banks, K S Rao and his associates did not even bother to generate fictitious bills or LCs. The value of the assets was changed according to the needs of the situation. If the balance sheet showed the total value of fixed assets as Rs 2477 crores with a minimal stock in trade of Rs five lakhs, the securities offered to various banks against advance of loans

was as much as Rs 122 crores — five times the amount in the books. (The total charges registered by the registrar of companies, on the other hand, made a happy compromise at Rs 752 crores.) With the securities of Rs 12 crores, the firm had secured advances to the tune of Rs 184 crores. These comprised Rs 46 crores from Andhra Bank, Rs 26 crores from Corporation Bank, Rs 22 crores from the Reserve Bank, Rs 6 crores from the Madhya Pradesh government, and another Rs 3 crores from the IDBI, State Bank of India, Indian Bank, Bank of Baroda and Bank of Maharashtra.

The *modus operandi* of Progressive Constructions was simple. First, the value of securities was inflated. This is on record in a letter (No 666/16/5303 dated 23 August 1982) by the general manager of Andhra Bank, Mr M Gopala Krishnaiah, to the Sultan Bazar branch which was dealing with the case. Mr Krishnaiah notes in his letter "The total value of the securities (of Progressive Constructions) was observed to be Rs 155 crores as per the statement submitted by the branch and on scrutiny it was found that some of the securities have been revalued at very high value." The second method was even simpler.

The firm had offered the same security as collateral to a number of banks. The same fixed assets in the form of machinery had been hypothecated to the Madhya Pradesh government as well as several other banks. For instance, while the balance sheet still showed fixed assets of Rs 208 crores in the financial year 1983, the firm had hypothecated machinery valued at Rs 392 crores to the Sultan Bazar branch of Andhra Bank against advances repayable on or before 15 January 1984 at 18 per cent interest payable quarterly. At the same time, the firm had also

received advances from the Madhya Pradesh government with the same assets as collateral. There was a third manner of deceit. The firm quoted as security the property that had already been sold. This is borne out by the fact that Mayuri Apartments, Begumpet, Hyderabad valued at Rs 123 crores remained in the list of securities pledged to the Andhra Bank, as submitted to court, long after it had been sold. Interestingly, the sale value of the flats in the statement of sale shows a total value of Rs 78 lakhs.

As if this was not enough, the conglomerate of firms headed by Progressive Constructions indulged in yet another game of deceiving banks. One firm or individual would draw a cheque in favour of another sister concern. This was done in spite of the inadequate balance in the account. The drawee would immediately get the cheque discounted at his bank—the Andhra Bank in most cases—which would allow it without any cross checking. It was only weeks—and sometimes months—later that the bounced cheque was presented for payment and adjusted in the drawee's account. Mr G Natrajan, a director in Andhra Bank had complained in a report that "Four cheques which were purchased for Rs one lakh each on 9 January 1982—three cheques were drawn on Andhra Bank, Bhopal and one on its Varanasi branch—had been returned unpaid and the same were adjusted on 13 July 1982 after they had been retained for more than six months. Such cheques were held for two to 24 months. The bank instruments were obviously not sent for collection by the banks immediately after they had been deposited as is required, but sent only at a later date to facilitate money "rotation" by the companies. The amounts involved ranged from Rs 50,000 to Rs

INVESTIGATION

five lakhs.

This discounting facility was availed of not only in the case of cheques drawn without adequate balances, but also with fake bills. The track-record of Yuvabharathi Chemicals and Steels, one of the affiliate concerns, is particularly notorious. To quote a Reserve Bank report dated 30 June 1982 in which Suryanarayana, inspector of the branches, clearly indicts the firm: "Several supply bills drawn on private parties have been purchased without obtaining confirmation. The powers of attorney were not registered in respect of three drawees. About ten bills purchased between September 1980 and January 1981 have been outstanding and one of the drawees not only denied receipt of the material but also complained that the bills were fake." The RBI report goes on to state: "The bank has also purchased certain advance bills under inland letters of credit opened. Although the bills were got adjusted, there is no evidence on record to the effect that interest thereon at Rs 71,000 has been recovered/debited from/to the accounts of the units." That the bank was colluding with the firm was obvious. The firm even managed to draw loans and obtained bank guarantees from various branches of banks not covered in the sanctions. This included the Karol Bagh branch of Andhra Bank in Delhi and the Raipur branch in Madhya Pradesh where there was no sanction for such facilities. This too has been commented upon in the report referred to earlier.

It is also difficult to explain the sudden disappearance of stocks worth Rs 12.92 lakhs pledged to the Andhra Bank and lying in the bank's custody unless certain officials at the bank were conniving with the firm. The deputy general manager at the central office of Andhra Bank wrote in a letter to the chief manager, Hyderabad main branch: "We refer to the above mentioned account and wish to inform you that the conduct of the account at your branch was not satisfactory and it has resulted in gross misrepresentation of facts to the central office. For instance you have informed us that there is sufficient DP under KCC and OCC in this account and vide your letter dated 10 March 1982 you have confirmed that the goods held by us are of the value of Rs 14.95 lakhs to cover the liabilities under KCC and OCC. The valuation made by our approved engineer

indicates that the value of stocks is Rs 2.03 lakhs only. This shows a deficit of Rs 12.92 lakhs and amounts to gross irregularity. Hence we advise you to call for explanation from the concerned officer for this serious lapse immediately and inform us about the action taken by you." Though the discrepancy and the charges of unauthorised removal of stocks by Yuvabharathi Steels were established no legal action was initiated by the bank.

The list of frauds committed on banks goes on. Not only was the Sultan Bazar branch of Andhra Bank covering up for it, but also the central office of the bank seemed to be sweeping it under the carpet. The vigilance officer in a letter to the general manager informed him of the purchased cheques which were returned unpaid and later adjusted (or outstanding) in the account of Progressive Constructions. In referring the matter to the chairman, the general manager admits: "The outstanding in the accounts are fairly large and they have been long overdue. The board had also asked for a special report on the issue sometime last year. The finance ministry too requested clarification of this account. So far we have not referred to the board nor replied to the ministry. We have also received a letter from the RBI. Shall we inform them of the present position? Submitted for instructions." The note indicates the laxity—deliberate or otherwise—shown by the bank in dealing with this case. Letters from the ministry seeking information on the irregular-

If Rajendra Sethia gave fictitious letters of credit (LC) against which he obtained loans from banks, K. S. Rao and his associates did not even bother to generate fictitious bills or LCs. The value of the assets was changed according to the needs of the situation.

ities in this particular account went unanswered for a whole year.

How exactly did Progressive Constructions, and the 40 companies under its umbrella manage to receive this preferential treatment? The answer to this is evident: Mr K.S. Rao, a partner of Progressive Constructions before it was transformed into a private limited concern, was also on the board of directors of the Andhra Bank. He resigned from the board of Progressive Constructions on 3 January 1982 following his appointment as bank director, but he continued to hold a major part of the shares of the concern which essentially remained a family business. After him M. Rajendra Prasad who is a nephew of Mrs K.S. Rao, took over as the managing director of Progressive Constructions. The other executive partners in his concerns included the son of Mr T. Anjaiah, union minister for labour and relations of VIPs like the former Supreme Court judge, Justice Jagan Mohan Reddy and also the former Andhra excise commissioner, D. Shankaran.

Another intriguing aspect is the fact that the names of several dead people still continue to be listed as partners or directors in the group. In Yuvabharathi Steels, Bopanna Punnaiah and Venigella Venkatarajamaiah continue to be directors even after their death. In Progressive Engineering, K. Sriramachandra Murthi continues to be a shareholder years after he expired.

The focus of attention has now shifted to the State Bank of India where B. Kameswara Rao, director in Progressive Leasing and Investment and a partner/shareholder in nearly half a dozen other concerns in the group, has been appointed the board chairman of the local branch of State Bank and also a director on the central board of the bank. The Lok Sabha debate on the frauds committed by Progressive Constructions was lively—the accusations levelled by Mr K.P. Unnikrishnan and Mr Jaipal Reddy provoked Mr K.S. Rao to retaliate despite the fact that a member with a pecuniary interest in a matter cannot use the forum of Parliament for that particular issue. But the debate could not prompt a promise of an enquiry from the minister. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, has been maintaining that the banks would come in for some major cleaning up operations. He has definitely set the ball rolling by replacing chairmen in several banks. But whether the effort is sincere or not is still to be seen.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

THE EMERGENCY

An Insider's View

Ranjit Gupta, inspector general of police, West Bengal, during the Emergency, recalls some lesser known facets

Early in 1975 anthropologists from all over the world gathered in Amsterdam to honour Gunnar Myrdal after he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics. After the speeches in felicitation were all over we sat down to a literally Dutch dinner. Myrdal sat from a distance that I was an Indian and walked over to my table. He asked a few questions about my country and then said: 'Look your country needs to be a hard state and enforce the laws you make. Go and tell this to Indira from me—root out corruption and the indifference to the laws she makes.' I dropped in at

Delhi on my way back home but did not ask for an interview with the Prime Minister. I felt if I passed the message on to P.N. Haksar it would be enough. Little did I know that Haksar was already on his way out because of pressure from the Sardarji clique and had probably ceased to enjoy the confidence of the Prime Minister. I never asked P.N.

Haksar later if he had mentioned the matter. But what Myrdal and others including many government executives wanted was a hard state. What we got instead was the Emergency.

That the political situation would turn that way was not clear to anyone. I do not think that at that stage Mrs Gandhi was thinking of the powers Emergency would bestow on her. The other two architects of the Emergency, Sanjay Gandhi and Siddhutha Shinde or Ray were not long-term planners. Ray was a political opportunist and reacted to situations (which would explain his frequent changing of sides). Sanjay Haksar thought was cunning, but I met him several times and his apparent quick decision making was mislead.



Police men lathicharging a procession led by Jayaprakash Narain in Patna

ing, he was merely reacting. However, back in Calcutta, I discovered that Ray, ordinarily a commuter between his office in Calcutta and his Delhi residence, started visiting Delhi more frequently—for, a fist size cloud in the Allahabad High Court soon darkened the political sky with far spread *cumulo nimbus*. Mrs Gandhi's election to Parliament had been questioned in this court and apparently things were not going too well there. Ray at this stage assumed the role of Mrs Gandhi's personal legal adviser. One would have imagined that Mrs Gandhi would have turned to her former colleague, the famous jurist Ashoke Sen but for certain reasons she did not. In any case in due course she lost the case in the High Court (which meant she was unseated) but got 20 days stay order for an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Tension had been mounting around the case which had become a political issue and after the High Court decision there was a country wide agitation. There was hardly any doubt that the opposition elements of various factions and parties wanted to take advantage of a legal decision for their political ends, namely to remove Mrs Gandhi and grab power. It was from their point of view an understandable matter for many of them had been removed from office by the imperious Prime Minister for her own political ends. Equally understandable was the desire of Mrs Gandhi and her Sardar Jang caucus to quell such opposition. But how were the two ends to be achieved?

Legally Mrs Gandhi was till the Prime Minister. Even if the Supreme Court did not pass judgment within 20 days or stay the High Court's order further Mrs Gandhi could have remained in office under the Constitution for another six months by which time she might well have won another parliamentary seat. The opposition conglomerate wanted her to resign immediately. There was a public meeting at the Boat Club in the capital the venetian opposition leaders reportedly planned to *ghetto* her at her South Block office. Meanwhile Jayaprakash Narain (whom I had met a couple of times in high Marwari company) made irresponsible statements, and appealed to the armed forces and the police not to obey the orders of Mrs Gandhi's government.

These were insignificant compared to what the government did to meet the situation. Mrs Gandhi invoked what was described as "internal Emergency". The evil consequences of such a regime will be mentioned



Indira Gandhi with Sanjay Gandhi, protagonists of the Emergency

later. But the fact is that the Emergency laws were quite unnecessary for Mrs Gandhi to maintain herself in power and to keep law and order in the country. Her appeal was in the Supreme Court, and there is no reason for believing that the court would have thrown out her case if well argued. Unfortunately, she did not call back Niren De, the attorney general and a brilliant lawyer from abroad to plead her case, nor did she brief Ashoke Sen but prepared to stick to Ray for legal advice. The laws of the country were adequate to handle the conglomerates and their followers, just a year earlier she had a minor exercise on these lines by her crackdown on the all India rail strike.

The Emergency exposed that Mrs

Gandhi did not have an administrative machinery for enforcing the special laws, the ordinary laws would have been good enough to tackle the threats of Jayaprakash Narain or George Fernandes, but I think she panicked and invoked the Emergency. It is a sad historical fact that only two persons in the country took Jayaprakash Narain and his threats seriously. One was Jayaprakash himself and the other was Mrs Gandhi. Jayaprakash's appeals to the armed forces and the police had no effect whatsoever, but a constitutional government on the British model did not suit the temperament of Sanjay Gandhi and his caucus who had already established themselves as the principal advisers to Mrs Gandhi. S S Ray was another but he did



S.S. Ray, former CM of West Bengal, with Indira Gandhi in Calcutta

not belong to that caucus. And he had some interesting evidence in his hand. One of his aides got the intelligence branch of a state to furnish a "secret" report about the plans of a united opposition. This of course should have been ignored for the opposition always have their plans. The question that the administrator has to consider is: Do they have the capacity to implement the plans? The organised Left always wanted to seize power, but should the authority react to it by locking up all the communists? Mrs Gandhi may have lost her mental balance, with Sanjay picturing a terrible future and Ray's panic in the appeal case; for in order to keep Ashoke Sen out, he brought in Palkhivala to plead her case in the Supreme Court. Thus came the Emergency. I knew nothing about these plans being hatched but investigations later helped me to reconstruct the entire story. It was clear to me almost immediately after the promulgation that the decision to clamp the Emergency was entirely Sanjay Gandhi's while S.S. Ray, by now the closest adviser to Mrs Gandhi apart from her son, provided the necessary legal advice. As the new decree was promulgated Khurana (now the Governor of Tamil Nadu) was brought in from Rajasthan as the new home secretary and Malhotra

was brought in to replace Jayaram. Many other key administrative changes were effected. (Incidentally, as soon as the Emergency was declared Palkhivala resigned and when Niren De came back from abroad he saw Mrs Gandhi and said, "Madam, what have you done?" Mrs Gandhi kept silent).

So far as I was concerned the Emergency was beyond my wildest dreams. The situation did not warrant such a measure. I had been to Delhi several times in the weeks preceding the Emergency, but I saw nothing unusual in the capital except, perhaps, a few small processions blocked by the police near Safdarjang Road. But then in Calcutta processions by the opposition are common. Jayaprakash Narain did not pose any threat in West Bengal or anywhere. At a meeting in Midnapore while he criticised Mrs Gandhi's government, the police held an umbrella over his head to protect him from brickbats. At Naihati, the Congress Party was prohibited under section 144 CrPC from disturbing his meeting. He had a tough time in Calcutta owing to the Calcutta police's inadequate arrangements. JP, hardly looked like a man who would create a revolution. Besides Mrs Gandhi did not have an

administrative machinery fit to handle the Emergency powers honestly.

On the morning of 26 June 1975 I arrived in Delhi on a routine visit and put up with Subhash Chakrabarty of the *Times of India*. Subhash asked me in great surprise, "What are you doing here? Don't you know that the Emergency has been clamped?" I said, "What do you mean?" Subhash replied, "It merely means that Morarji Desai was under detention, so were Jayaprakash Narain, Charan Singh, Atal Behari Vajpayee." "Can I speak to Calcutta," I said, stretching for the telephone. I instructed S. Basu the Dy IG (IB) not to arrest any one until I returned by the evening plane. Basu said he had already arrested some people under government orders but would await my instructions before making further arrests. However, no more important arrests were made in West Bengal. During the Emergency Mrs Gandhi chalked out a 20-pt programme which was good. Sanjay added five more points, all of them reasonably sound. But the administrative machinery was not suited to implement the programme. All that the corrupt and near-corrupt officers of the central and the state government did was to use the powers to threaten, arrest and extort money.

This happened in West Bengal where the highest authority used the powers to wreak personal vengeance

Some good, however, did come out of the Emergency. The trains ran to time, the government clerks came on time and worked and notorious tax evaders were locked up. The Congress leaders, instead of protesting or criticising, were busy impressing Mrs Gandhi, Sanjay and the Safdarjang coterie. However, with the emergence of Sanjay Gandhi as a centre of power, S S Ray, D K Barooah and Rajni Patel formed an anti group. The dispute was over the immense power that the Emergency bestowed on Sanjay Gandhi. Sanjay won but factions emerged in the Congress which worked against Mrs Gandhi. The most powerful faction comprised the three leaders mentioned earlier, who while fawning on Mrs Gandhi, started subverting the party. The results were to be seen in the 1977 polls. Meanwhile Sanjay and his coterie took charge of the affairs. The home minister was a mere cipher. Om Mehta was given absolute power. Almost in every ministry Sanjay's planted men misused power. And I do not think Mrs Gandhi knew much about it for, unfortunately she relied on the intelligence agencies and all the reports pouring into New Delhi only emphasised the positive effects of the Emergency. Moreover she allowed the press to be gagged, thereby cutting herself off from information about what was really happening in the country. Even an irresponsible press is useful for it forces the executive to be responsible. There was yet another adverse effect of the censorship: the entire world press (barring the government-controlled press of the communist world) went against Mrs Gandhi. (In any case I think the manner in which the press was controlled was crude and uncivilised, there are refined ways of influencing the press)

I have a strong impression that Mrs Gandhi was not quite happy with the situation and did from time to time think of going to the people. I was a member of a sub-committee entrusted with the job of picking out bits from the Emergency laws which would be necessary for a hard state and the administrative areas where such laws should prevail. It was then that I heard in the North Block that the polls might be held in November 1976. But then the views of the intelligence agencies and the Sanjay coterie prevailed. Mrs Gandhi was basically a democrat—as her going to the polls in 1977 proved—but I think she was not in a proper frame of



Demolition work in progress at a south Delhi colony during the Emergency

mind then. There was none to advise her properly.

The attitude of the world towards the Emergency was mixed. We are now told that Mountbatten did not like it, but many Tories did. I had during the Emergency an opportunity to meet Harold Macmillan over lunch. He had said "If they ask me at the customs at the Heathrow 'What have you to declare?' I would say, 'I declare Emergency'." The American and the British press did not like it but probably the CIA utilised the opportunity to burrow holes in the Indian political community.

The intelligence motivated as it might have been, took many liberties. I asked P N Haksar when I met him after the Emergency whether his residence was "bugged." He said that he had taken the precaution of having his telephone and the other strategic areas of his house properly "checked" to ensure that he could talk freely. (He was really in the dog house then because, Sanjay did not like him. The Pandit brothers—Haksar was related to the owners—were searched, the most respected executives arrested and humiliated.) Talking to the Delhi head of the IMF, I always had soft music played, protecting myself against both sides.

I met Sanjay several times during the Emergency. He was very polite to me. I met him at his invitation. I

asked him why he was always finding with Ray. Sanjay said he would not do so if Ray stopped criticising him in public. In any case Ray asked me not to meet Sanjay anymore but I could not resist the temptation when he came with the Prime Minister to Darjeeling. With them was Rajiv always in the background, reserved and silent.

The Intelligence Bureau headed by Malhotra advised elections when the Congress party was torn by factional strife. A major faction comprising Ray, Barooah and Rajni Patel had been demanding polls but they were not heard. The atrocities perpetrated by the authorities had alienated the people. Many Congressmen like Jagjivan Ram sensed this and left the party. As I have said earlier the misuse of the Emergency powers was inevitable since Mrs Gandhi did not have an administration formed for the occasion. (Rajiv has one which is still less fit, but adoption of modern technology might strengthen the central machinery.) And in the elections the inevitable happened. Mrs Gandhi was removed from power. S S Ray did not even contest the state polls and I, the observer in this case, left office preparatory to retirement much earlier than it was due. But in this play, though everyone was "dead," there was an epilogue which has merged now into a separate and a very promising play.

In the highlands of Welo the *belg* rains have been abundant. The grass is springing sharp and green through the eye holes of the cattle skulls in the Borkena valley. Farmers who ploughed at the first sign of damp have barley standing a foot tall. The dark fine soil is split by phosphorescent green blades everywhere but on the state farm, where the heavy East German tractors had to wait until it dried out enough to take their weight. Precious topsoil, the life of the upland farmers, has been swept into the gullies and sluiced down to useless roadways and river beds. The peasants collect it in baskets and calabashes and lug back up on to their fields where they are repairing the rock terraces and bunds broken out by the rains. They bank the soil gently against the rock wall so that the long level fields are dished to hold the water. Sometimes they scoop short trenches above the walls, tiny polders running like dotted lines along the contours of the hills. Above the tilled and sculpted fields stand ranks of *eucalyptus globulus* and hedges of tall cactus to hold back the incessant tumbling of stones from the croded hilltops. No land has ever been more lovingly cultivated than this.

As yet more black cloud mass and burst over the people always to be found on the road between Kemise and Kombolcha driving their cattle to and from market, walking to and from school or standing by the hundreds of water jugs placed in line next to the pump they throw up their heads and let the water run into their mouths and eyes. The little herdsmen leap and skip the slit polythene bags that should be keeping them dry flapping around them like wings. As our landcruiser splashes past a young woman flings out her arms the better to feel the wet and whirls like a dervish. In the ditch a woman gathering water pursues her calabash shakes a handful at it and flashes a grin.

Nothing could be more different from the last time I drove along this road. Then it was crowded with skeletal figures trudging like automata, blind and deaf to everything but the death that pursued them. The weakest could no longer walk but tried to inch forward on their fleshless buttocks. Now there are more feeding centres and dry ration distribution centre. All along the road we pass groups of peasants heading back to the uplands with their month's provisions on the men's heads and the backs of women and donkeys. For some the time of relief rations is nearly over but for others it will never end. Above Dese, in the *awraja* of Dese Zuriya, the population density is 181.8 per square kilometre, and year by year the exhausted earth can produce less to feed them. Further north in Lasta famine has returned year after year.

For the farmers on these upper slopes the rain has brought more misery. Sudden drops in temperature pick off emaciated people like sniperfire. The damp has aided the flowering of hordes of pathogenic organ-

A Tale of

GERMAINE GREER in the second and Ethiopia narrates how the Ethiopians



A child waits eagerly for food outside an emergency feeding centre

Above Dese, in the *awraja* of Dese Zuriya, the population density is 181.8 per square kilometre and year by year the exhausted earth can produce less to feed them.

isms. In the famine shelters health workers fight off diarrhoeal disease with anything that works, there is neither time nor the facilities for an exact identification. *Shigella* lurks in every ditch, attacking people in forms so virulent that they cause heart distress and shock even in those not suffering from malnutrition. Shigellosis can be far swifter and more lethal than cholera, unless we are speaking of cholera *el tor*, which can lie dormant for months and then kill in hours by causing dehydration so sudden and catastrophic that no known method of dehydration can keep pace with it. As we climb up from the Borkena valley towards Dese we pass litter bearers trotting through the rain, carrying their sick on their shoulders. Behind them run the relief team, ready to take

Uttarpara Jankhona - 11/11/1985
Uttarpara - 11/12/1985 - 11/12/1985

f Hope

last instalment of her report on
re winning the war against want



A hapless mother with her child outside a relief camp

over when they tire. No vehicle can stop and take their burden on board, for the load they carry may be deadly. They have no way of summoning ambulances, even supposing that such luxuries exist in anything like sufficient numbers. For many the heart bursting run will be made in vain. Twice we pass litter bearers wrapping the body they carried tightly in its shroud.

Through the streets of Dese stumble exhausted women with vast bundles of wood and canes on their backs: these are all that remains of the *tukuls* they used to live in, which they are bringing to sell as firewood in Dese market. Not that they will get much for them, for the market is glutted with such piles of half rotten lumber. Thousands of families have made the hardest decision, to

In Dese, a woman sits under a tree; the child in her lap is rigid, his head thrown back and his teeth bared in the grin of tetanus.

leave their land forever. The town is jammed with them, sleeping in every half way sheltered spot, unable even to beg, for the people of Dese have nothing left to give. In the roadway outside the Dese headquarters of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission children and old women crouch beneath a semi trailer picking through the dirt for stray grains shaken from the sacks being off loaded for transfer to smaller trucks for distribution in the highlands to the north and west. A woman sits under a tree, the child in her lap is rigid, his head thrown back and his teeth bared in the grin of tetanus. When I pull back the rags that shroud lying figures in the lee of walls I find mothers with newborns at the breast, too exhausted to stagger the last few hundred yards to help and shelter.

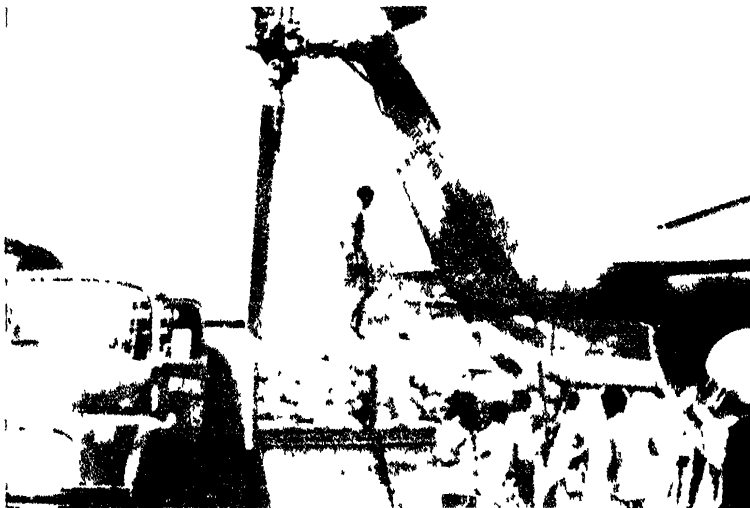
For there is help and shelter. Just east of the town proper, on a tract of almost level ground they can find the Dese transit shelter, crowded, poorly housed in army tents but with food, *kita* bread for adults and supplementary feeding for children managed in this case by Save the Children who wisely insist only that the children be washed in order to qualify for feeding. Oxfam is building a 45,000 litre storage tank for clean water so that Dese will not go the way of the more conveniently situated shelter at Kombolcha, now isolated for health reasons: diarrhoea both bloody and watery. Most of the work in the shelter is done by volunteers working for an extra food ration of 90 kilos of grain a month, which they are free to dispose of as they choose. The camp as usual has neither fence nor gates: the inmates are free to come and go as they please but go soon they must for new arrivals turn up every day. The army tents are already far too crowded for safety. Everyone the sheltered and the shelterers waits anxiously for the buses to arrive and take some of this throng far away to homes of their own in the south west, in Welega.

There are more urgent cases however. Dese is a provincial capital, poor as it is, it has far better resources for the relief operation than smaller centres. The buses were needed more urgently at Garba, about 70 kms east of Dese, where the local party officials had had to find a way of accommodating thousands of famine victims who converged on their small town from the highlands to the north. They had built a couple of hundred small *tukuls*, with a terrific expenditure of effort, for the surrounding area is completely denuded. Even finding the bundles of straw for thatch must have involved hundreds of hours of work. Into this makeshift encampment came more than 4,000 people. The *kebele* had scraped together some food supplies but the maintenance of any degree of hygiene in food preparation, water supply and human waste disposal was completely beyond them. The Red Cross famine relief shelter at Batu was less than an hour's walk away, but the

*safari*och, as settlers are called in Amharic, waited where they were. They were free to gather firewood on the hills and to collect water from any source they could find or to walk to the market in Bati town to barter their last hides or part of their dry ration for oil or green vegetables or cigarettes, but they returned to the transit shelter at Garba, primitive as it was. During the night of 19 April, the buses began to arrive.

When the sun came up, hundreds of people had been already marshalled by their group leaders and stood waiting quietly for the loading of their bundles of chattels to begin. The women's hair had been newly braided to mark the beginning of the Christian year at Easter; some had smeared their foreheads with butter as a protection against vermin. When I tasted it to see if it was really butter, they laughed. Children clambered over the bundles to pull their mothers' breasts out of their dresses. Most people were thoughtful, but there was a vein of

Through the streets of Dese stumble exhausted women with vast bundles of wood and canes on their backs: these are all that remains of the *tukuls* they used to live in, which they are bringing to sell as firewood in Dese market



Foodgrains being loaded in trucks for distribution

excitement running through their solemnity. The cadre in charge of the operation, Comrade Fitsum, a Tigrean, came up to welcome me, "You see, no guns," he said "Their movement is spontaneous." Then he melted into the crowd. The loading was magically smooth and quiet. The drivers' assistants and party workers climbed onto the roofs of the buses and lifted up the bundles. Once they had seen their possessions safely lashed down, the families climbed into the bus, each clasping a packet of biscuits and a calabash full of water. Some of the children seemed too weak and ill to be going anywhere but the families tied them up tighter in their rags and bundled them on. As each bus loaded, it moved off and waited a few hundred yards down the road. More buses kept arriving until there were 17

In Nekemte, the provincial capital of Welega, a welcoming guard of honour had been arranged. At eight next morning the convoy began to roll through the checkpoint, to the

If the carefully planned settlements in Gojjam, Welega and Ilubabor fail, our refusal of support will be one of the main causes of that failure, but we will not suffer for it. Neither will the bureaucrats in Addis Ababa

sound of rhythmic clapping. When the buses were closest and the citizens could see the pinched and shadowed faces of the settlers, they stopped their chatting. On all sides I could hear hushed sounds of awe and compassion. As the convoy turned off the main road and pushed down the narrow road to Arjo, a more spontaneous welcome broke out. Children burst out of the schoolrooms, waving both arms and shrilling at the tops of their voices. Farmers left their ploughing and ran to the side of the road, both hands raised in the beautiful Ethiopian greeting, signifying surprise and delight. Women came to the door of their *tukuls*. Some of them wore the dark blue dresses and symmetrical braids of Welio; these were the ones who called greetings, and screamed explanations to anyone who could hear. The settlers sat still and silent, gazing at the green fields and the tall trees and the shiny brown faces of their own people, proprietors of all this beauty and plenty.

South of Arjo, the buses turned off the road again and squeezed their huge bulk along a bulldozed track and across the Didessa River, a tributary of the Blue Nile, two hippos played, oblivious of their passing. Up the river bank and on the buses rolled. Here there was not a soul to greet them. The buses could not negotiate a deep gully with a creek at the bottom, the drivers' assistants and the stronger settlers spent a half hour lugging rocks to make a causeway, and the buses rolled over. We were six kms from the settlement site. Three kms further on, the buses stopped while the drivers reconnoitred a tree-trunk bridge over a small gorge. Some peasants were standing at the bridgehead. We heard a shout, saw thin legs flying, and suddenly there was hugging and kissing all round. "Brothers," said one of the drivers happily. The other settlers looked on, their faces unreadable. They may have been seeing what I saw: one of the men at the bridgehead stopped his eager questioning of the new arrivals and turned and walked blindly into the bush. The news from home had been bad.

In the bucketing buses the settlers sat frozen with tension, hardly daring to hope that they had arrived. They were almost too overwrought to notice the people who lined the road clapping and chanting the same throbbing song of welcome that we have heard when highlanders welcome the food drops, or the old man whose gnarled hands were coaxing out an obbligato from his dulcimer. As the buses pulled up by the storehouses, the settlers stepped gingerly down, utterly silent. The noonday sun was merciless, but they stood still wrapped in their blue-grey blankets as if in shock. The excitement was too much for the members of the honour guard who took off in a whirling dance, chanting and ululating and stomping their feet, hurling their *dulas* into the air. I pointed out one woman to Comrade Habtu, RRC officer in charge of the project. She was peering fixedly through the legs of the

dancers at a group of boys on the other side, who were staring back at her "Come, come!" shouted Comrade Habtu, and two of the boys broke ranks and came flying across. The woman, who had risen groggily to her feet, folded them in her arms "Their mother," said Comrade Habtu unnecessarily. On all sides there was clapping and kissing, and the elaborate handkissing that is kept for more distant or senior relations, but we were all aware of the people whose gaze got wider and darker as they scanned each busload, and of others whose eager questionings were producing tears which were not tears of happiness.

Worst of all, as one bus unloaded I saw the white coats of the three paramedics flapping amongst the grey blue blankets. Something unbearably light, bent up in premature rigor, was handed out on a stretcher. The old woman of the night before passed me sobbing, carrying one emaciated child while another clung to her back. She must have got the gul through the night with the warmth of her own body but the last grueling hours on the bus had been too much. Party workers guided her through the crowd to the clinic.

Comrade Habtu led me to the official dais, a bench by the tractor shed. The people gathered quietly before us for the official speeches. I hoped desperately that no one would ask me to speak, for I could not have uttered a word, even the Amharic for "good luck" which I had learned specially. Looking at the 1,500 faces massed before us, some still wet with tears, all marked with weariness and privation, I felt my self-possession finally dissolve and groped for Comrade Habtu's hand beneath the bench. To my surprise he took it, gripped it and hung on. We sat like that for the duration of the speeches, which were mercifully short.

While the settlers ate their welcoming meal, Comrade Habtu took me to see the few *tukuls* built for the new arrivals by the local people and party volunteers. I noticed that the surrounding trees had blackened trunks. Wildfire, probably set by nomads, had already destroyed 80 of the new *tukuls*. "How did you manage?" I asked. "We built them again," said the project director, as if it was all in a day's work. In most settlement areas the department of agriculture builds a model *tukul*, to show the settlers how to improve the basic structure so that it gives greater hygiene, privacy, ventilation and light. At Kone, a local Welega man who volunteered to join the scheme had built such a beautiful *tukul*, with cleverly planted fences made of cassava plants and a secluded area for his bee hives, that it was used as the model instead. Another man from Welo had rebuilt his *tukul* on the model of his homeland, with a beautiful bow shaped roof. He showed me his seedbed crammed with tiny plantlets of red pepper, for distribution to the new arrivals to bring up in their own plots.

Besides the neat *tukuls* I noticed funny little square constructions in the middle of

In the famine shelters health workers fight off diarrhoeal disease with anything that works: there is neither time nor the facilities for an exact identification

each group of four houses "Latrines," said Comrade Habtu. As I had already seen him deal with a settler whose first reaction to the sight of a creek was to pee in it, I had no doubt that the latrines would be used properly. "We have clean water too," said Comrade Habtu, "from two protected springs." Then looking across to where scores of new *tukuls* nestled among the native trees he asked, "What do you know about tsetse fly?" He might as well have asked, "What do you know about malaria, filaria, goitre, leprosy, TB, tetanus and bilharzia?" The answer would have been the same. Without a massive increase in resources, for all their planning and dedicated toil, the RRC will make very little headway against any of them. Help for the establishing of iodising plants will control goitre. Nurse practitioners in the settlements have more success in identifying early cases of leprosy and in seeing that sufferers take their Dapzone than in less controlled environments. P10



Starving Ethiopians at a relief camp in Bati

Dese is jammed with thousands of families, sleeping 'n every half-way sheltered spot unable even to beg, for the people of Dese have nothing left to give

longed treatment for TB is likewise feasible. UNICEF offered to provide a health screening service and a Minimal Survival package of vaccinations for resettlers, but on condition that the scheme was halted for three months until it could be set up. The government refused, without explanation. In fact, given the pressure of popular movement and the lengths of time that settlers had already spent in inadequate holding shelters, there was not three months to waste. Moreover, the health status of the local populations in the resettlement areas is so poor, that any discrimination in the providing of health services would be totally unacceptable. Nothing short of a massive national campaign of vaccination against polio, measles, tetanus and TB will do. The personnel is available and in place, all that is needed is the vaccines, the training and the registration system. The thousands vaccinated in emergency relief shelters for example have no record of the fact and these vaccinations will eventually have to be done again. When



In the roadway outside the Dese headquarters of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission children and old women crouch beneath a semi-trailer picking through the dirt for stray grains shaken from the sacks being off-loaded for transfer to smaller trucks...

Resettlement is mentioned in hushed tones...Chief among the reasons for the nudge-nudge-wink-wink approach is the Russian involvement. No one can get close to the Russians. They live in a closed camp at the old airport in Addis, and they are clearly under orders not to fraternise...

it comes to malaria, filaria and bilharzia, which will spread in Ethiopia if any degree of irrigation is achieved, and are already endemic in two thirds of Ethiopia anyway, a massive, concerted and fantastically costly programme of research is needed. But as long as only poor countries suffer from these parasitic diseases, such a programme will never be undertaken.

In designing their resettlement project, the RRC has taken into account all the possible objections to the scheme, and has done its best to pre-empt them, with what is in view of its poverty a remarkable degree of success. What distorts the whole operation and obscures its guiding principles from the view of the international community is what I can only call the Tigre factor. Slightly more than 40,000 Tigreans have been settled in the last six months, about half of them in Welega, and half in Ilubabor where they are the majority of settlers in the Gambela area. Arguments that resettlement is simply a plot to destroy the power base of the TLI are clearly nonsensical, when only two out of every fifteen settlers are Tigrean. Nevertheless there are worrying aspects of the Tigrean operation which are not to be found in resettlement as a whole.

International aid workers in Mekele are only too ready to describe the results of resettlement from their point of view. Virtually all of them have had to deal with cases

of women whose husbands have disappeared, most of them with the ration cards which are issued for recipients of food aid in Mekele. The assumption is usually made that these men have been "taken" for resettlement. It is at least as likely that they have preferred three meals a day and a modicum of self-esteem in the Lthiopian People's Revolutionary Forces or in the Tigrean People's Liberation Front. A strange phenomenon involving the appearance at the Italian hospital in Mekele of numbers of young men with gunshot wounds in the hand may have something to do with the recruitment methods favoured by the TLF. It is possible too that the missing men did what they have traditionally done in times of famine in the past: simply walked away in search of work as casual labourers. There are many Tigreans to be seen wandering in the streets of Addis Ababa the day before I left. I encountered a traffic policeman confronted with the problem of moving one of them on. The trouble was he was dead. Despite all these possibilities the prejudice persists among international relief workers in Mekele that missing men have been blackballed for resettlement, and so strong is this impression that they will not take the obvious step of approaching party officials and requesting information. Resettlement is mentioned in hushed tones, with knowing nods.

Chief among the reasons for the nudge



Life at a relief camp in southern Ethiopia

nudge-wink-wink approach is the Russian involvement. No one can get close to the Russians. They live in a closed camp at the old airport in Addis, and they are clearly under orders not to fraternise. Where the Poles are anxious that their helicopter food drops are observed by the press, the Russians prefer to shroud their operations, however philanthropic, in mystery. Their motive might be interpreted as a desire to isolate Ethiopia from her non-socialist friends by forcing her to share a secret. Or it may simply be an extension of the bloody-mindedness that causes such tension between Russia and all her allies, even loyal and long suffering Cuba. Ethiopian officials obliged to work with Russians find them completely indisciplined and unreliable. Some say that when the war in the north ends, the Russians will be kicked out of Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopians are obliged to turn to the Russians for help in moving Tigrean settlers out of Mekele. The land route is insecure. The TLI affects to believe that resettlement is a specific attack on its power base and has attacked settler convoys in the past. The movement of settlers has already completely disrupted routine bus services throughout Ethiopia and there is no possibility that more buses could be made available for the run from Mekele to Addis. The only solution is to air lift the settlers from Mekele to Addis, and to bus them from there. The only carriers who would agree to take the settlers were the Russians. The settlers, about 160 at a time, are herded into the cargo bay of Antonov 12s where they sit on the floor. The cargo lay of the Antonov 12 is unpressurised. Some international aid workers say that 10-15 per cent of the settlers who go on board the Antonov airlift out of Mekele are taken off dead. What this would mean is that truckloads of bodies would be driven out of Bole airport each day that the Antonovs bring settlers in. Of 8,000 people shipped between 9 and 13 April, more than 800 would have had to be taken from Bole for burial. As far as I could gather from quizzing the Ethiopian Red Cross, there was not a single fatality, although stress could well have accounted for one or two, given the sheer numbers flying and their poor state of health.

The obvious way to deal with such wild and destructive rumours would have been to have let me fly with the settlers out of Mekele, but although I specifically asked the RRC public relations office to approach the Russians on my behalf, the request was never made. I was told that the RRC itself was worried that I might overreact to the occasional scuffle between settlers and those responsible for getting them onto the Antonovs. It is at least as likely that the RRC was intimidated by the Russians and by the possibility of ructions in the Politburo if my conclusions should be critical of the Russians, and simply took refuge in inertia. Even if I had flown with the settlers I could not positively discount apparent eyewitness



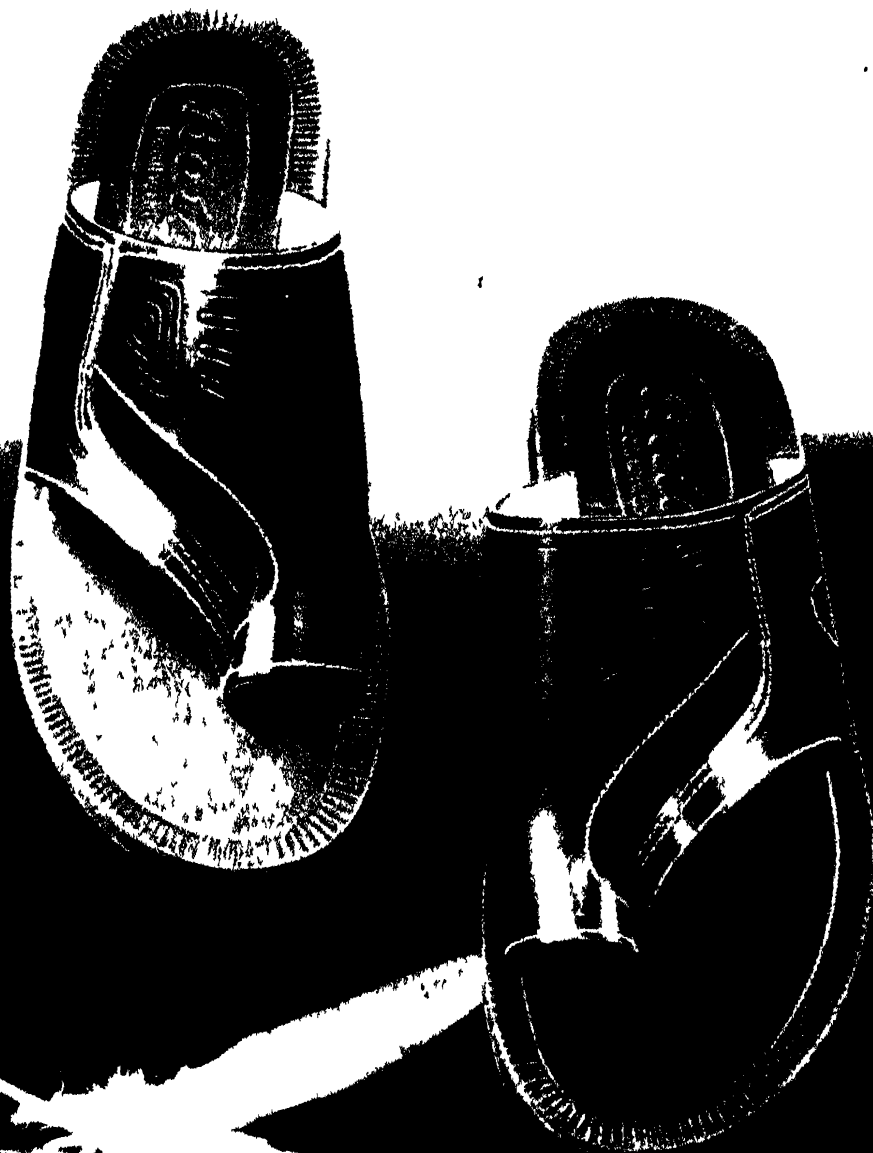
Drought victims at a refugee camp at Bati, Ethiopia

accounts of men being rounded up in Mekele and beaten with sticks in order to make them get into trucks, although I do not accept that these men were necessarily being "taken" for resettlement. Nor could I positively discount the possibility that Russians safe on the pressurised flight deck are criminally indifferent to their human cargo and fly as high as they please. For people who live at eight or nine thousand feet, flying at 17,000 or so in an unpressurised aircraft is unlikely to cause problems, but in poor visibility the Antonovs may have to climb to above 22,000 feet. When I asked Colonel Ashote of the RRC Air Arm if the flight would be unpleasant for the settlers, he said, "Decidedly." When asked what aircraft would be better suited for the job, he said, "The Hercules." Although the RRC asked every air force flying Hercules in Ethiopia to help with resettlement, they all refused.

If I could not see the Tigreans being moved from Mekele I could at least see them at their final destination. About half of them end up in the new settlement areas around Gambela in Ilubabor. In Welega they are a small minority, easily submerged among the numbers from Welo, but in Gambela there

When it comes to malaria, filaria and bilharzia, a massive, concerted and fantastically costly programme of research is needed. But as long as only poor countries suffer from these parasitic diseases, such a programme will never be undertaken

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SPECIAL REPORT



When the sun came up, hundreds of people had been already marshalled by their group leaders and stood waiting quietly for the loading of their bundles of chattels to begin.. The cadre in charge of the operation, Comrade Fitsum, came up to welcome me, "You see, no guns," he said

are settlements that are 80 per cent Tigrean

By the time I got to Gambela after endless delays and desperate appeals to various dignitaries to help me, I was seriously worried that what I was going to see there would invalidate all the heroic effort I had witnessed in other settlement sites. I was almost certain that I would see gangs of terrorised men being forced to work by armed guards, and the whole enterprise would take a taint from the Tigre factor. RRC figures told their own story, for half the Tigreans being resettled are family heads, a significant departure from the general pattern, which could too easily be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to remove able bodied men, fathers and eldest sons, from a focus of social unrest. As we rolled over the tightly guarded bridge which is the only way in or out of Gambela, I was convinced that I had come to the Ethio-

pian version of Siberia only as hot as Siberia was cold

The tour that we made of the three settled sites in Gambela, Abole, Ukuna and Perbon go, was the most exhaustive of all. I had to be certain that there was no corner where the equivalent of a chain gang could have been hidden. At the end of the day I had seen all there was to see. Saddest were the displaced baboon colonies sitting perplexed on the edges of the vast fields where the Nazret tractors toiled preparing the fat earth for sowing. I saw many *tukuls* where no woman tended the fire, but all their private plots were tilled. Anuak women walked along the settlement roads, carrying pots for sale to the settlers and waved to us as we passed. I noticed the settlers were growing cassava, in imitation of the Anuak, although it is not to be found in Tigre. There were guns about, to be sure, but they were carried by the Anuak and by the settlers. In view of the spoor we saw crisscrossing the roads everywhere I would have preferred to see more of them, rather than fewer. Only a hundred yards from the settlers' nursery beds, a family of crocodiles basked on the mud flats. It was clear to me then that the Tigreans are no different from all the other settlers I had seen, whether walking across the high pass between Debre Sina and Debre Birhan, or hitching rides on truck beds or riding the buses hired by the RRC. All they asked was a chance to build a new life and make a new home. As we passed men walking back from the fields with their hoes over their shoulders they greeted us with raised hands, like lords of the terrain.

The British government following the line set by the United States, has refused to grant direct development aid to the Ethiopian government. The League of Red Cross Societies, UNICEF, Save the Children, Oxfam and the FAO have all given assistance to settlers, but none will give assistance to settlements as such. It seems as if the international community hopes that the resettlement projects will fail, and the revolutionary government of Ethiopia be discredited for trying to minimise the wastage of human life that is always involved in spontaneous migration and settlement in undeveloped areas. If the carefully planned settlements in Gojjam, Welega and Ilubabor fail, our refusal of support will be one of the main causes of that failure, but we will not suffer for it. Neither will the bureaucrats in Addis Ababa. The hard working, uncompromising, dignified and determined people who have made the great safari will pay the price of our opinions. Their right to our assistance is beyond politics and our reasons for denying it are merely frivolous.



Victims of the famine await medical help at a health centre

A Rogues' Gallery

Ronald Biggs and Henry James Prince were gifted from childhood but they used their personality and intelligence for criminal ends. In these extracts from *Extraordinary People* (published by Pan Books, London, and distributed in India by Rupa and Company, 15 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 700 073 price £5.95) Derek Wilson profiles the two celebrated criminals.

I am not malicious really although all through my life I think I've been determined that I will not allow people to get the better of me easily, somehow I will stage a come back and get on top if I can

Ronald Biggs has spent the greater part of his life preventing society getting the better of him—so far with considerable success. A childhood spent in the back streets of south London taught him toughness and self-reliance. The family was not desperately poor but if Ronald wanted pocket money, wear or other luxuries he had to work for them—or steal them. Nicking things from shops, scrumping and generally putting one over on the adult world was second nature to young Biggs and his friends. The bomb sites and empty, condemned houses of war-torn London were their playgrounds. Stealing became habitual and it was only a matter of time before he was caught. In 1945 Biggs made the first of many appearances before the magistrates. He went through several jobs, joined the Royal Air Force, deserted, and was eventually given a dishonourable discharge for stealing. In 1949 he served his first six-month term in prison. From then on his career for several years was typical of most petty criminals.

But Biggs was not typical. For one thing he had a high IQ, as tests made during his Borstal days showed. He read Hemingway and Steinbeck. When he took a carpentry course in Lewes jail he achieved better results than anyone else had ever achieved. Another factor that marked him out was his refusal to be intimidated. Whatever punishments were imposed on him in prison he was always involved in whatever rackets were going.

So things continued until 1960. In that year he married Charmian, a girl he had fallen in love with nearly four years before. He decided to go straight, especially after the birth of their first son. With a home and family life suddenly took on a purpose. Biggs worked as a self-

employed carpenter and went into partnership with a builder friend. He and Charmian had another son. They lived in a rented semi. They had become typical respectable citizens. Then, in 1963, the opportunity arose to buy their house. They could not find the cash. That was when a friend approached Biggs offering him a share of a really big job. And so an unsuccessful small-time crook found himself part of the gang that pulled off one of the most famous crimes of all time—the Great Train Robbery.

Biggs's share of the haul amounted to about £146,000, which he split into two consignments and persuaded friends to hide for him. The robbery was audacious but it had been well planned and the crooks thought they would get away with it. But too many people were involved. There were awkward loose ends. Inside three weeks Biggs and some of the other accomplices were in prison. At the trial and conviction most of them received staggering thirty-year sentences.

Ronnie Biggs has never been once meekly to accept incarceration. Now

with a fortune waiting for him on the outside he was even less disposed to remain in jail. He had planned to escape even during the trial. That attempt was thwarted and it was a year after his arrival in Wandsworth Prison that his successful breakout came. £40,000 bought the help of a squad who parked a furniture van beside the prison. A special platform had been built on it to reach the top of the wall. Biggs's friends let down a rope ladder into the exercise yard and in a matter of seconds the escapee was speeding through the streets of London in a Ford Zephyr. He was hidden, smuggled across the Channel and received plenty of security, which included work on his fingerprints. By the beginning of 1966 he was in Australia where he was soon joined by his family. Some of the robbery proceeds were smuggled to him there but much more remained in England and Biggs never enjoyed the lion's share of his ill-gotten gains. However, he had enough to make a new life and for three years he settled to a domestic existence. Then the police tracked him down and he was forced to move on again. This time his destination was South America.

Throughout his travels Biggs never lacked for friends or helpers. People took to him readily, gave him shelter, gave him money, lied for him and protected him from prying authority. He had many close shaves but the closest came in 1974. Needing money, he had offered his story to the *Daily Express*. They revealed his whereabouts to Scotland Yard and, within days, Ronnie Biggs found himself handcuffed to a British police man. There remained only the formality of extradition proceedings before Biggs was brought back to serve out his sentence. At the last moment he found a way out. His current girlfriend was pregnant. Under Brazilian law paternity is grounds for the refusal of extradition.

Ronnie Biggs is safe as long as he remains in Brazil. He earns money from newspaper features and books about his extraordinary life.



Biggs with his son Mike

In 1846 God came to live in the Somerset village of Spaxtead. Fifty three years later much to the consternation of his followers he died there.

The life of Henry James Prince is a proof that the more extravagant the claims a man makes the more likely he is to find people to believe him. Of course, it does help if the man himself believes those claims. Prince had a way with women. It was a gift, a trait of personality. He became aware of it when he was still a child and he traded on it for the rest of his life. He was a sickly infant, one whom female relations and friends instinctively wanted to mother. Yet there was also about him a sensuality which gave to their ministrations a quality which was not purely maternal. One of his early admirers was a spinster lady of a religious turn of mind. She and the child spent hours reading the Bible together, especially concentrating on the voluptuous love poetry of the Song of Solomon. Experiences such as this shaped the boy's whole concept of life. His family's attempt to steer him away from the religious and the erotic into a medical career was doomed to ultimate failure. He qualified at Guy's Hospital and returned to practise in his native Bath.

But the young medic who wandered the wards of the Bath General Infirmary was no ordinary doctor. His treatment was directed more to patients' souls than their bodies for he regarded illness and disease as manifestations of evil to be exorcised by bringing the sufferers to a realisation of the pangs of eternal damnation. He was equally conscious of his own spiritual shortcomings. His sexual urge was strong and temptations to indulge it were many. His journal tells how guilty he felt about impure thoughts and the spiritual agonies he endured as a result. 'My horror increased to such an extent that I was on the verge of fainting and when I was able to rise my body trembled and perspired.' Overwork and mental strain brought on a near-fatal illness. During his recuperation he became increasingly subject to visions. The visions impelled him to seek ordination. He returned to Bath full of revivalist zeal and drove his mother to distraction by filling his room with doting women and leading them in long, noisy prayer meetings.

Soon he was off his mother's hands—away at Lampeter College learning to be a priest. He was in some ways a model student, impeccable in his personal behaviour and zealous at his books. In other ways he was a pain in the neck. He gathered

around him a group of students and local people whom he led in frequent meetings for prayer and Bible study. He was outspoken in his condemnation of what he regarded as corruption. On one occasion Prince was a guest at a party given by the vicar principal. Suddenly overwhelmed by the worldliness and sinfulness of the occasion, he leaped to his feet, dashed a glass of sherry out of the host's hand, treated the company to a brief homily on the evils of drink and rushed out of the room.

In 1840 Prince graduated and was despatched as curate to the relative obscurity of Charlchurch. He had had the foresight to marry a wealthy and elderly admirer (it was to be he explained, a spiritual marriage—no carnal hanky-panky). The work of



Prince (centre, front row) with his disciples

God could not be done on a curate's stipend. Within two years Prince had packed the church at Charlchurch with frenzied converts and had agitated the bishop. He was sent packing. He moved to a parish in Suffolk and repeated the procedure exactly. Prince, the incarnate messiah, as he now believed himself to be, denounced the Church of England and started preaching on his own account, on the south coast.

It was here that he experimented with the idea of a community of the faithful. His preaching had attracted many devoted followers, some of them rich. They would do anything for their leader and give all to him. He now called them out of the world into the 'abode of love,' the *Agapemone*. The basis of the com-

munity was total obedience to the *Beloved* (Prince). Sexual relations were taboo for everyone except the *Beloved* and those ladies whom he chose to favour. The experiment was satisfactory. What Prince now needed was a purpose built *Agapemone*—larger, secluded, more expensive. With money donated by converts who continued to pour in, Prince built at Spaxtead a suitable estate for himself and his chosen faithful. It comprised a chapel, a sizable house for the *Beloved*, segregated accommodation for the men and women, and was surrounded by a high wall.

In 1846 the new way of life began. The faithful arrived in their smart carriages and took possession of the *Agapemone*. Their rule of life was not strict. No regular pattern of services was observed. There were odd hours and croquet. All lived in the work about the house and grounds. But Prince's iron will ruled all and life within his own personal harem was distinctly more comfortable than in the abodes of his disciples. His wealth was prodigious. He visited the Great Exhibition of 1851 in an open carriage recently purchased from the Queen Mother, attended by the most beautiful women.

The final condemnation, some would say the final blasphemy, occurred in 1856. Prince announced it as the Great Manifestation: the Holy Ghost in the form of the *Beloved* would take flesh thereby freeing flesh from sin. The disciples can have had no idea what the words meant. They certainly found out. Before the assembled fellowship in the chapel Prince, who was 40, laid a 16-year-old virgin on a couch before the altar and had sexual intercourse with her to the accompaniment of organ music. It was more than some of the faithful could stomach. They left taking their money with them. It seemed that the *Beloved's* reign might be at an end. But he was too firm in his own self-belief to be overwhelmed by such a setback. For another half-century life in the *Agapemone* went on virtually unchanged though Prince was assailed by criticism and law suits (from disillusioned disciples wanting their money back). Prince lived so long that none of his devotees doubted his immortality. When death came it took the *Beloved* as much by surprise as it did his followers.

Even then the power of Prince's personality was not dissipated. His community continued until well into the twentieth century. Not until 1958 were the *Agapemone* and its contents put up for auction.

GUJARAT

Madhavsinh Solanki: Finally the Fall

But a place may be found for him in the union cabinet

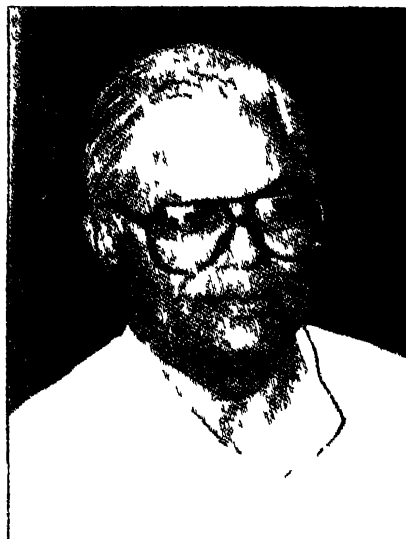
After months of indecision and adillydallying the Congress(I) high command finally decided to remove the chief minister of Gujarat Madhavsinh Solanki. Though Solanki finally resigned on 5 July and was succeeded by Amarsinh Chaudhury who had been home minister in the Solanki cabinet the decision was probably taken after the chief minister's interview with Rajiv Gandhi on 20 June. The Prime Minister had made up his mind on the basis of the 52 page Vijay Naval Patil report and the observations of the five member high level committee which visited Gujarat recently. The interview was perhaps a last chance for Mr Solanki (who may join the union cabinet) to explain his position and persuade the Prime Minister to give him another chance to prove himself.

In those 30 minutes Madhavsinh Solanki tried to convince Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that the anti reservation agitation had been financed by Congress(I) dissidents in the state. The Prime Minister asked for evidence which the chief minister could not provide. Madhavsinh Solanki returned the same day to Gandhinagar and till 5 July tried desperately to save his position.

For the next fortnight up to 5 July his efforts continued till Rajiv Gandhi told the Gujarat CM to step down in the interests of the party. Solanki had been camping in Gujarat Bhawan waiting for the call from the Prime Minister's office since 3 July. The drama had shifted to Delhi when the Gujarat Governor B K Nehru reached there on 2 July. There was even talk of the imposition of President's Rule in Gujarat and a possible cabinet reshuffle at the centre to accommodate Mr Solanki and placate the backward classes in Gujarat as well as the strong kshatriya community to which he belongs. Moreover there were apprehensions about a walk out by Solanki and his supporters.

Madhavsinh Solanki's fate was sealed on 2 July when three members of the five member commission which the Prime Minister had sent to Gujarat to assess the situation on 23 June G K Moopanar, general secretary of the AICC(I), S Mohan Deo, former Congress(I) MP and P Shiv Shankar told Rajiv Gandhi that Solanki had to go. The remaining two

members Narain Dutt Tiwari and Harideo Joshi chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan respectively, wavered because they felt that an unceremonious exit of Solanki would anger the backward classes. Actually the five member commission was really sent not only to confirm the original Vijay Naval Patil report but to assess the consequences of the removal of Mr Solanki and find a suitable successor. The Congress(I) high command, however took its time to decide



Madhavsinh Solanki the reign ends

Solanki thus became the sixth Congress(I) chief minister to resign after Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister even though the Congress(I) did extremely well in the Assembly elections in Gujarat.

Solanki's resignation in the middle of an Assembly session was also a major embarrassment for the ruling party. In fact, Madhavsinh Solanki has presented a budget in the state Assembly which he will not pilot. Madhavsinh Solanki was unable to see the Prime Minister but did meet the finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Moopanar on 4 July. Solanki, still unaware that the decision to remove him had already been taken, waited in Gujarat Bhawan for a call from the Prime Minister's office. The *coup de grace* finally came on 5 July. Just the day before, another Congress(I) team comprising Mrs Amarjit Kaur, a Congress(I) MP

(Rajya Sabha) and Santosh Mohan Deo, former Congress(I) MP from Assam left for Gandhinagar to determine how many members of the state Legislature would support Solanki. Meanwhile, V P Singh, Arun Nehru, and Makhan Lal Fotedar, the political adviser of the Prime Minister were already working on the details for the Congress legislature meeting on 6 July in Gandhinagar to choose the new leader. Solanki left New Delhi on a special plane on 5 July with V P Singh, rural development minister Chandulal Chaudhary and Mr Moopanar.

According to observers Solanki's kshatriya Sammelan at Lakshimpur is believed to be a major reason for his exit. During the proceedings a sword was brought out and worshipped. It was almost a call to arms for the kshatriyas and a show of strength to frighten the other communities in Gujarat. Four Congress(I) MPs participated in this blatantly casteist sammelan. Amongst them were Madhavsinh Solanki's father in law, Ishwarbhai Chauada. Eight Congress(I) MLAs and a junior minister in the Solanki cabinet also took part in the function. It was this meeting which prompted prominent dissidents Sanat Mehta and Jinabhai Daji of the Congress(I) to send telegrams to the AICC(I) headquarters in New Delhi threatening to resign if action was not taken against Solanki.

It also prompted the Prime Minister on his tour abroad to send Vijay Naval Patil to Gujarat. The Lakshimpur incident and later the gory incident of 9 June when eight people were roasted alive in Daryapur finally sealed Solanki's fate. The Patil Report later confirmed by the five member commission revealed that Solanki no longer had any control over the administration. What proved to be most damning in the Patil Report was evidence which revealed that information about the army's limited withdrawal from Daryapur had leaked out. The obvious conclusion was that the 9 June incident occurred because of this. Other allegations included the attempt of the Solanki government to divide the armed forces stationed in Gujarat and the state police. Thus, the curtain really came down on Solanki on 20 June. Till 5 July, he lived on borrowed time.

But does the change in Gujarat have any meaning? Solanki has been removed but even in defeat he appears to be victorious. The man who has replaced him is one of his own choice as Amarsinh Bhilabhai Chaudhary is a staunch supporter of Solanki and his accession means that Solanki would continue his hold over Gujarat politics. Amarsinh Chaudhary say observers will actually govern by proxy.

Besides Amarsinh Chaudhary was the home minister in the Solanki cabinet and he is as responsible for the events in Gujarat during the last few months as Solanki. If Solanki was ousted because of his inability to handle the crisis political observers feel that Chaudhary too should have been ousted. It is strange justice, they think to punish one person and reward another for something that they were both involved in. Amarsinh Chaudhary as the home minister in the Solanki government was an utter failure. The performance of the engineer turned politician as minister for social welfare was termed 'successful' but actually Chaudhary simply could not come to grips with the situation. Indeed at one time he was being assisted in his work by Piabodh Rawal his predecessor as home minister of Gujarat who had been denied a party ticket in the last Assembly elections.



Amarsinh Chaudhary

There were heated intra party discussions on how advisable it would be for Chaudhary to succeed Solanki when the Gujarat Congress(I) legislature party met in Gandhinagar to elect a new leader on 6 July. It was not a "unanimous" election. Two important Congress(I) dissident leaders Jinabhai Darji, the former PCC(I) chief and Sanat Mehta, the former finance minister of the state, had put forward their own proposals.

After prolonged discussions between these groups and the team of AICC(I) observers comprising V P Singh, G K Moopnar, Chandulal Chandra kai S M Deo and Mrs Amarjit Kaur, the decision had still not been reached. Jinabhai Darji, a leader of the backward classes, was making a claim to the leadership. The AICC(I) observers favoured Natwarlal Shah, speaker of the Gujarat Assembly, but the Solanki group stuck to its own demand the new CM had to be someone from Solanki's cabinet. The deadlock was finally left to New Delhi to break and V P Singh and Solanki met the party president, Rajiv Gandhi. Minutes after the meeting Amarsinh Chaudhary was elected leader of the Gujarat Congress(I) legislature party.

The removal of Madhavsinh Solanki is not likely to end the Gujarat crisis. Experts however, believe that the Solanki government has not been removed 'in spirit,' as it is Solanki's man who has now become the chief minister. What is more Amarsinh Chaudhary's credentials as a crisis man have not been established. He has failed to deliver the goods as home minister. Can he now take on the responsibility of a chief minister and haul Gujarat out of the mess it is in today?

Madhu Jain and Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

RAJIV GANDHI'S PRESS CONFERENCE

A Public Relations Exercise

The Prime Minister fields questions with aplomb

"Had President Zia ul Haq seen this, he would come to India for his next press conference so keen is he on publicity," said a Pakistani journalist immediately after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's first formal press conference on the morning of 7 July. The Pakistani President might well have been tempted. The press conference was 'made' for television. On a Sunday at 9.45 am which is prime time for television the stage was all set with pink gladioli arranged on black furniture to form a perfect backdrop to the Prime Minister, immaculately dressed in white kurta payjamas and a jacket. Such flower arrangements were rare in national press conferences with previous Prime Ministers.

For the Prime Minister—from the moment he was escorted in by the principal information officer I Ramamohan Rao, six minutes ahead of schedule to the end of the hour

and a quarter long press conference—this media event was a walk over. Exuding self confidence, the Prime Minister handled questions on the situation in Punjab and Gujarat, corruption charges against Bhajan Lal, India's relations with the super



Rajiv Gandhi: In command

powers. Pakistan's nuclear bomb and his definition of himself as PM, swiftly and, with a deadpan expression. Rare were the 'uhs' and 'ers' which look so out of place on TV. This was a telegenic Prime Minister skilled in the art of press conferences, his laurels from the successful press conference at Washington's National Press Club last month not yet forgotten. His ease and his awareness of the showbusiness aspect of politics were all too apparent although his frequent attempts at humour "a categorical maybe" in answer to a question on a possible cabinet reshuffle, did not get too many laughs.

Clearly, the Prime Minister was in command. But, it was all a bit too easy, most of the questions being weak and wide off the mark, statements which Rajiv Gandhi dealt with alacrity. The only moments when the Prime Minister was in a bit of trouble was when Sunder Rajan brought up the question of India being ready for autonomous radio and television. During the rapid-fire exchange, the Prime Minister momentarily lost his cool. Referring to the Prime Minister's Washington press conference during which the Prime Minister had

said that India was not ready for the removal of government controls on television and radio. Sunder Rajan asked whether it was not in fact the "Congress party which was not ready for autonomy." Excerpts from the conversation:

Q I just wanted to ask if you will permit me.

A Do you want my answer or your question? (the smiles are now missing)

Q Sir I was just if you will permit.

A You permit me and I will permit you (a slightly steely grin). As you say, India has been a vibrant democracy for 38 years now and if this was really an issue with the people, they would have raised it. They have not raised it. We feel and I reiterate that we are not ready for total autonomy for these two institutions and we are not going to give it at the moment.

Q My point is this I know when the Janata Party was in power, they were busy quarrelling among themselves

and they had no time for these basic reforms. But my point is, the Indian people were never consulted in this matter and how do you say we are not ready for this particular democratic reform? In what respect are we not ready? Is it a risk?

A By seeing the way that you people print and publish, I don't think you behaved responsibly at all.

Q But that has nothing to do with radio.

A Of course, but if it spreads to radio, there will be a tremendous danger to the country.

Q But is radio a counterblast to the press or a corrective (Some murmurings of discontent are heard from a section of the press. Some of them angrily asking Sunder Rajan: Do you want a debate or a press conference?)

A You want a debate or should we carry on with the press conference (taking the cue from the section of the press)

Other than that flicker of anger which crossed the Prime Minister's face during the clash with Sunder Rajan, one other question momentarily upset the Prime Minister. He was asked whether the Emergency would ever be imposed again and whether imposing the Emergency had indeed been the right decision. There was a brief pause between the question before the PM answered: "I think that at that time it was a right step and there were various forces working. If those conditions are repeated, it might be necessary to have an Emergency. But that will have to be seen. With the conditions that prevail there cannot be an equivalent situation. Things will be different. I personally, am not in favour of using such harsh measures if they can be avoided, but if it is necessary, they must be used."

The PM also seemed to be irritated and angry, when a journalist criticised the Rs five crore Patiala Cultural Complex whose foundation stone, he had laid a few months ago. The Prime Minister said "I am very sorry that you have such notions and I will guarantee that it will not end up as a building with a few chairs (these had been the journalist's words) but will end up as a vibrant cultural institution."

One of the more striking aspects of this press conference is the fact that there was hardly a foreign voice heard that day. Normally, foreign correspondents particularly from the West, dominate. This time, despite the novelty of the shiny black and white cards which each person wanting to ask a question had to hold up, many of the regulars who used to go to the press conferences held by Mrs Gandhi, were not as valuable. The *Investia* correspondent was allowed two questions as was H K Dua of the *Indian Express*. But almost absent, were the outpourings of praise from courtiers, the tone was businesslike and there was no flutter on stage.

Another factor responsible for the completely different atmosphere during the question hour is, of course, the fact that Rajiv Gandhi is not Indira Gandhi. The late Prime Minister had a more expressive face and was far more emotional.

This was his first formal press conference, and the Prime Minister remained formal, except for brief attempts at light repartee. The conference was almost one-sided. As one television viewer said, "*Dekho kitna chalaak hain, aur journalist kitne buddhu hain?*" (Look how clever the Prime Minister is and how stupid the journalists are.)

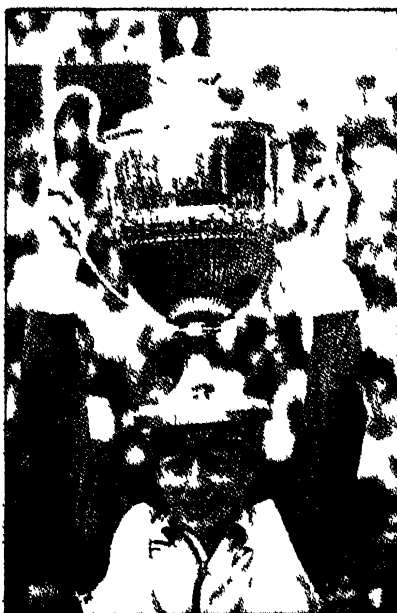
Madhu Jain, New Delhi

King of the Courts

Johan Kriek, runner up at the Stella Artois tournament at Queens' Club, a warm-up event before Wimbledon, has the right to say, "I told you so." Just after being demolished by an unseeded 17-year-old West German giant called Boris Becker, he had warned, "If he maintains that sort of level, he can win Wimbledon." Becker, himself was more reticent, "I just want to win the first round and see what happens," he had said modestly after his 6-2, 6-2 win over Kriek.

The teenager from Liemen, outside Hiedelberg, in West Germany, is coached by Ion Tiriac a fiery Rumanian who was once Ilie Nastase's doubles partner. Tennis writers have already run out of adjectives while eulogising Becker's game. He has an explosive serve, the most powerful in the game, and murderous ground strokes and volleys. The popular tabloids in Britain, searching for a sex-symbol after Bjorn Borg and a successor to Superbrat John McEnroe, have found one in young Becker.

This was Becker's second Wimbledon. Last year, he had bowed out in the third round to Bill Scanlon with an injured ankle. This year, however, nothing could stop his triumphant march. He beat big-serving Hank Pfister, Matt Anger, and seeded stars Joakim Nystrom, Tim Mayotte and Anders Jarryd to reach the finals and meet giant-



Becker after his triumph at Queen's Club

killer Kevin Curren, the conqueror of John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors. Ice-cold as ever, "Boom-Boom" sent down 20 bludgeoning aces and retrieved some of the experienced Curren's best shots in style to win 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 and 6-4 and become the youngest ever and the first unseeded player to win the men's singles title at Wimbledon. He is also the first German to win the title.

Srinjoy Chowdhury

ORISSA

Selling Babies for Survival

A severe drought hits Kalahandi district

For Rama Gahir and the members of her family, the birth of a male child would have been a happy occasion. But this time, she had almost hoped that the child would be still born. Three days later, in the absence of her husband, she trudged 25 miles from her village in Maharaajor in the Kalahandi district of Orissa to sell her new born son to a complete stranger. And Natabar Pradhan, a sub-inspector of the post and telegraphs department in Khariar, a block headquarters (the stranger who carried off the child) had bought it for his wife Hirabati, who had three daughters and now wanted a son.

What prompted Rama Gahir (and a number of other women in the area) to sell their children? Both Pradhan and Rama Gahir admit that it is the severe shortage of food because of the drought in the district which has prompted such desperate measure. The women have little choice, if they don't sell their children, they will die anyway. The Orissa government, however, has denied reports of the sale of babies in the state. Both the buyers and sellers are denying everything. They are afraid of the legal complications and intimidation from the government agencies.

Pradhan denied that he had "bought" the baby from Rama. He retorted, "If her condition was good, why should she hand over the baby? She was going to leave the child at

the mission hospital (at Khariar). I wanted the baby and she gave him to me. My wife wanted a son as we have three daughters and lost three sons. My wife is happy to have the baby. We did not want to fuss over the whole thing. Now I think I did a wise thing in accepting an elderly person's advice while stating before the police and the court that I took the baby for adoption. Along with me she (Rama) also signed the document before the police stating that she willingly parted with the baby."

The issue of the distress sale of babies was first raised by Mrs Parbat Gir, a noted social worker, who manages an orphanage at Paikmal in the neighbouring Sambalpur district. She claimed, after a visit to the drought hit areas in Kalahandi, that babies were being sold by their hungry mothers and relatives. The state government remained silent over the issue after her story was published in a Sambalpur based Orissa daily *Huakhanda* and it was only when reports appeared in the national press that the government chose to deny the sale of babies. But the government admitted that Rama Gahir gave away her baby to Pradhan for adoption. The official press, however, ignored the other cases where other families in distress gave away their children in the reports. This was even conceded by the ruling Congress(I) party. The party's deputy chief whip, Mr Bhu-

pinder Singh recently admitted in the Assembly that conditions of scarcity, unemployment and distress were prevailing in Kalahandi which was compelling parents to part with their children. "Ask the rickshaw pullers in Raipur (Madhya Pradesh) and most of them will tell you that he is either from Khariar or Titlagarh or Kantabanji (the last two places are in Bolangir district bordering Kalahandi)" said Satya Bhushan Sahu, a Congress(I) legislator.

Banita, a 13 year old girl from Amalpali village in Khariar block, was recently sold to a person in a village about five kms away by her sister in law, Phanas Punji. Phanas already burdened with two children found it impossible to support Banita, an orphan. Her husband has left home in search of work and has never returned. Phanas broke down before a group of visiting reporters while relating her terrible conditions. She denied Mrs Parbat Gir's story but local villagers confirmed that she sold Banita.

The government has tried to pressure people to deny that they had indeed purchased or sold children. Natabar Pradhan was called to the Khariar police station several times after the story broke. According to Natabar Pradhan, he and Rama Gahir have made a joint statement before the police which states that Gahir offered the child to Pradhan for adoption. To avoid complications, Pradhan and his wife have even made an affidavit in the court of the sub-registrar at Nuapara to that effect. Local villagers claim that the local *tehsildar* also visited Phanas Punji's village after Banita's plight was known. Visiting newsmen have found the Khariar police to be tight-lipped about the whole affair. Ram Chandra Gaud, an officer of the Khariar police station, refused to say anything about the sale of babies in the area. He claimed that the matter was being investigated by Pradip Barik, the officer in charge who had gone on leave to his faraway village in Niali block in Cuttack district since 18 June. When Barik will return is, however, not known. All what Gaud said was that he had heard of Rama offering her baby for 'adoption'.

It was not only Phanas Punji's husband who has gone away to search for work. The list of missing husbands is virtually endless. Himti Majhi, a newly married adivasi girl of Kikiribeda village in Khariar block is in an equally difficult position. After her husband Harichandra (Mangalu) Majhi left in search of work soon after their marriage, she



Rama Gahir's son sleeping in Natabar Pradhan's house

was abducted and sold at Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesh from where she managed to escape with another girl of her area who had met a similar fate, said the village *chowkidar*, Ghana Mahananda.

Kapil Narain Tiwari, a prominent local politician claimed that sheer poverty was driving people to sell their children. The government, instead of helping the families, he said, is trying to hush up the issue. The OXFAM field officer, Jagdish Pradhan, who has been working in several villages in the district, declined to discuss the baby sale issue to avoid controversy, but agreed that the living conditions were appalling. An OXFAM worker, Motiram Tandi claimed that ten members of his family were "half-starved."

Kalahandi district, about 450 kms from Bhubaneswar and on the Orissa-Madhya Pradesh border, faces perpetual drought conditions in most areas. As Kapil Narain Tiwari pointed out, the people there are haunted by the fear of the 1965 famine. If the rains fail this year in the district, the crops will wither as the area lacks irrigation facilities.

Drought in the area have created conditions of severe scarcity. Agricultural unemployment is high. Ab-



Starving villagers in Kalahandi

out 60,000 people in the Boden block and about 20,000 persons in the Koma block are starving. Nearly 25,000 people in the Sinapali block and another 15,000 in the Khariar block are in dire straits. Said Akhil Deb-guru, a villager, "There is absolutely no work for us. People do not have any belongings in their houses except a few utensils. You can see the appearance of the emaciated people and draw your conclusions." Several people have already left their homes for Raipur and other areas of Madhya Pradesh in search of work.

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

the corner was turned very slowly. The decisions will, however make life easier for the two lakh Indians and Pakistanis who travel across the border to visit relatives. The delegations agreed to allow bookings for seven cities across the border from railway stations in both countries. Similarly, six cities would be linked together telephonically.

In the fields of information, culture and education, a certain amount of "progress" was made. Both sides have submitted a draft text with specific proposals. There will be an exchange of correspondents between All India Radio and Radio Pakistan by the end of August. A newspaper correspondent from each country will be allowed across the border. Curiously enough, the Pakistanis will send a correspondent from *Jung* (a slightly anti-Indian paper). It is believed that when Khurshed Alam Khan was told about this, he wondered why a paper more well disposed towards India like *Aman* had not been chosen.

The liberalisation procedures include arrangements for a greater flow of tourists between the two countries, an increase in the number of pilgrims and exchanges of cultural groups. Five scholarships will be given to Pakistani students in the fields of engineering, business, administration and medicine and vice-versa. Pakistan will also take part in the next Indian international film festival and there will be an increase in the number of exchanges of intellectuals and artists between the two countries. These, however, remain peripheral issues. But trade relations remain a major problem. The Pakistani spokesman admitted that there was not "much room for manoeuvre" here and the differences in trade matters appear to be insurmountable. While Pakistan has refused to alter the existing trade patterns under which business with India is done through the public sector, it has also refused to change the practice of what is called "a positive list." According to Indian officials, Pakistan has a list of permissible items for trade but what the Indian side would have liked to see is a list of items which are not allowed.

Culture is another disputed area in the relations between the two countries. Pakistan made it clear that it did not want a free exchange of newspapers and periodicals. The Pakistani delegation was not keen on having exchanges in the performing arts. Exchanges of musicians and museologists were fine, they seemed to feel. But theatre was not.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

INDO-PAK RELATIONS

The First Unsteady Steps

Moves by both countries to normalise ties

The three-day meeting of the Indo-Pakistan joint commission which concluded in New Delhi on 4 July, chaired by the minister of state for external affairs Khurshed Alam Khan and the Pakistan foreign minister, Sahebzada Yakub Khan was held, as was repeatedly stressed by Pakistanis, in an extremely "frank and friendly atmosphere." But, the problems of the trade and basic day-to-day relations remained. In a telephonic conversation between the Pakistan President, General Zia-ul-Haq and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi just before the talks began, the Pakistan President asked Mr Gandhi to give the talks an "energetic push." The Indian Prime Minister, however, retorted that the talks were being held on the 13th anniversary of the Simla Agreement which made the occasion an auspicious one.

Although the occasion was ostensibly an auspicious one, there appeared to be a certain amount of hostility in both camps. The major differences mainly arose over mat-

ters of trade dampening the initial enthusiasm over the progress made in the consular and cultural fields. Significantly, the sub-commission which included trade was the only one which was headed at the director level, the remaining three being headed by joint secretaries.

The Pakistani foreign minister said, "We have turned a corner." But



Sahebzada Yakub Khan

KERALA

Fight against Fundamentalism

Muslim woman stands up for her rights

A Supreme Court judgement in April this year ordering a Muslim husband to pay money to his divorced wife stirred up a hornet's nest. In Kerala, both the factions of the Muslim League, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the All India Muslim League (AIML), joined hands to urge Muslims to fight against the Supreme Court judgement and Ramzan was observed as Shariat Protection Day throughout the country. And while liberal Muslims were arguing with conservatives about the interpretations of the Shariat, came the news that the Jamaat committee of Bhimapally mosque in Trivandrum had sentenced a Muslim woman Suleekha Beevi, to 101 lashings as also a clean shaving of her head for alleged infidelity and for consumption of liquor.

However, a few days later the Jamaat rescinded the order because of the immense pressure that built up when the media, the people and above all the leaders of the community disapproved the Jamaat ruling. On 21 June, RSS and the CPI(M) took out separate processions in Trivandrum with the RSS men shouting slogans like "Think of what will happen if Hindus become a minority." When the Jamaat members realised that the Hindu communalists would take advantage of the situation, they rushed to Suleekha for a reconciliation.

The 46-year-old Suleekha Beevi, unlike many other Muslim women had stood for her rights and issued a lawyer's notice to the Jamaat asking them to withdraw the punishment order and apologise for the humiliation she had suffered. In retaliation a van with microphones went around the Bhimapally area announcing the ostracism and asking shopkeepers not to supply goods to the family.

Islamic scholars in the state have, however, condemned this practice. The Imam of the Trivandrum Juma Masjid, Ahmedkutty Maulavi, told SUNDAY that the Shariat can be practised only in Islamic utopias where people don't feel the need to do wrong. In his mosque the Jamaat never punished those brought before him but only advised and warned them. Even the Imam of the Bhimapally mosque had advised the Jamaat members against punishing Suleekha Beevi. But for the Jamaat

members it was a way to infuse fear into poor Muslims.

Meanwhile the conservative Muslims are also planning to organise a campaign against the Supreme Court for its historic judgment in favour of divorced Muslim women. At the time of writing, the deputy chief minister Avukaderkutty Naha is facing a probable case in the Kerala High

Court for his alleged statement against the Supreme Court judgment which the petitioner Nawab Rajandran says is a clear case of contempt of court.

It was a Muslim woman from Indore, Shanu Begum, who valiantly fought the long-drawn-out legal battle starting from 1978, against her lawyer husband Mohammed Ahmed Khan for alimony. The constitutional bench of the Supreme Court judged that according to Article 125 (1) (A) of the Constitution, Muslim women are eligible for support money from their husbands till they remarry.

Bino John, Trivandrum

ENVIRONMENT

Another Deadly Leak

Workers are exposed to radioactive material in Hyderabad

The recent discovery of radioactive material in mysterious circumstances in two public sector organisations near Hyderabad has raised questions about the effectiveness of security measures being taken regarding radioactive source material. While the managements of both the Electronics Corporation of India (ECIL) and the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) have claimed that the exposure to the radioactive material would not harm the employees the fact that radioactive material was removed from its proper storage place by disgruntled employees has alarmed other workers in the units. The initial attempts by the managements to deny the incidents has only added to the employees' apprehension. The plea that departmental inquiries have been instituted has not allayed the fears of the environment protection groups either.

The NFC authorities have taken strong exception to photographers taking pictures of the demonstrators and even snatched cameras and detained photographers in the security section. Recently, some radioactive material was discovered in a water cooler in the NFC premises. The thorium (a radioactive) was found by some of the workers but there is no explanation as to how it got there and how long it had been inside the water cooler. The management later claimed that an inquiry had been ordered into the incident and that there was no cause for alarm.

In a similar incident at the ECIL a used cobalt source was located in a scrap heap after an anonymous tip

off on 12 June. An official of the nuclear instrumentation group received a phone call informing him of the radiation source. The used cobalt source in a brass container in the original casing, the size of a small pencil stub was located with the help of a radiation survey meter.

According to ECIL managing director B.S. Prabhakar, the survey meter showed a reading of 1 MR (Milli Roentgen) per hour while the normal dose for occupation is 2.5 MR per hour as per the international radiation safety regulations. Altogether 27 welders were within the 1 MR range and 303 employees of the NI group were referred to a private pathologist in Hyderabad as a precautionary measure for preliminary blood tests for a complete blood picture and a platelet count. "The blood report did not show any sign of abnormality," Mr Prabhakar said.

Both NFC and ECIL which have been brought under the purview of the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board did not inform the State Pollution Control Board of the incidents. Departmental inquiries have been instituted to look into the incidents while managements of both organisations maintain that adequate precautions for employees such as radiation badges and periodic radiation surveys of the premises ensure a proper check on radiation levels in the work area. In both cases, the radioactive material was removed from the source room or its proper storage place and was later discovered by the workers without the management even being aware that the material was missing.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

PUNJAB

The Torture of an Innocent

Political worker disabled by police torture

Bed number nine, Dental hospital ward, Amritsar. The man lying on the bed has his face plastered and bandaged. He looks a Hindu but is a cleanshaven Sikh. Harjinder Singh (32), an activist of the Kirti Kisan Union (KKU) is the latest victim of police brutality in Punjab. The use of third-degree methods of interrogation by the police, is evident when you meet him.

Though the Amritsar police released the KKU activist on 9 June after illegally keeping him in custody for 19 days, Harjinder, a farmer who belongs to Jagdev Kalan village, about 18 kms from Amritsar, has been physically disabled and reduced to a lame and stammering wreck. His

only crime was that he joined his comrades of the KKU, a CPI(ML) supported organisation of Punjab, and protested against police atrocities in the state. Sarabjit Singh Sandhu, the KKU Amritsar unit president said, "the local police are after our workers because we are exposing them. There was no case against Harjinder, but he was kept in the police station for 19 days and tortured in such an inhuman manner."

Harjinder, the president of the village unit of the KKU was arrested from a tea stall, on 22 May. "I was taking tea when the police came to arrest me," said Harjinder in a trembling voice. "They took me to the Sadar police station where they

interrogated me. They asked me about the weapons which they said were in my possession and mercilessly tortured me. I thought they were going to cripple me. I was unable to move my arms and legs and the pain in my back was unbearable. They told me that I had given shelter to proclaimed offenders." From 22 May to 9 June, the day he was released after a KKU deputation led by Baldev Mann, general secretary of the Amritsar unit of the CPI(ML) met the local deputy commissioner Ramesh Inder Singh and the district police chief Bua Singh, Harjinder was tortured every day.

The day he was released he was immediately taken to the Majitha government hospital. The chief medical officer (CMO) then sent him to the dental hospital where he was operated upon for the treatment of his badly broken jaw. It will take Harjinder months to recover fully.

Baldev Mann told SUNDAY that the

Big Business vs Breast Feeding

In February this year, the Infant Nutrition Information Service (INIS), in a letter to the Social Welfare ministry, pointed out that advertisements for a new baby food in the *Indian Express* (23 January 1985) and *The Statesman* (14 December, 1984), were in gross violation of Articles 5.1 and 4.2 of the Indian National Code for the promotion and protection of breast-feeding. The baby food was *Milk Care*, a product of the Dalmia Dairy Industries.

The Indian Code was adopted in December 1983. Article 5.1 forbids advertising of breastmilk substitutes to the general public. Article 4.2 says that all advertising materials should contain clear information about the superiority of breast-feeding and the health hazards of unnecessary or improper use of infant formula. The ministry was urged to instruct Dalmia Dairy Industries to amend its publicity material in compliance with the code. So far, there has neither been any response to the letter nor any sign of action. The advertisements, however, have been appearing regularly. It is learnt that the *Milk Care* makers had tried to give free samples to doctors in a Delhi hospital who refused to accept them.

Some newspaper groups have been accepting *Milk Care* advertisements. On 30 March, a six column advertisement in *The Hindustan*

Times, covering three-fourths of the page, had the heading: "The best developed children will belong to this family." The visual shows three tins: *Milk Care* infant formula, "follow-on" baby milk, and cereal weaning food. The copy claims that the *Milk Care* formula is "closest to mother's milk", specially formulated by a government organisation, CFTRI. The base line slogan reads: "Because health is the most precious gift you can give your child." The advertisement agency is, Everest.

The advertisement in the *Statesman* in December said: "Six doctors, three medical scientists and four research chemists worked for nine years, so that this little one could grow up right." In extremely small print in the advertisement, is the statutory warning: "Breastfeeding is best for your child. Kindly consult your doctor before starting your child on baby foods."

The Dalmia group also manufactures the *Mum-Mum* feeding bottle which is advertised as "Every mother's need for the healthiest way to feed." The bottle is supposed to have "a unique angular shape" to keep the baby's head at "an angle similar to feeding at the breast."

The government's gesture in adopting a national code will mean very little unless it is prepared to implement the provisions and pun-

ish the offenders. Article 11 of the code on 'Implementing and Monitoring' says:

- Government shall give effect to the principles and aims of this code through legislation and other suitable measures.
- The manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this code, and appropriate non-governmental organisations, professional groups and consumer organisations are expected to collaborate with the government in its implementation.
- Non-governmental organisations, professional groups, institutions and individuals concerned, should draw the attention of manufacturers or distributors to activities which are incompatible with the principles and aims of this code, so that appropriate action can be taken. The appropriate government authority should also be informed.

One has just seen a major example of the violation of the code, duly monitored by the UNICEF-supported INIS, and brought to the attention of the social welfare ministry. Significantly, in India so far, even the multinational baby food firms have not used advertising methods followed by the Dalmia group. Are the Dalmias confident that the government can be relied upon to support the interests of Indian big business?

Vimal Balasubrahmanyam, Secretary

KKU has decided to sue the Amritsar police for torturing Harjinder. Said Mann, "How long will we continue to suffer at the hands of the police? We have decided to file a criminal complaint against the Amritsar superintendent of police, Gobind Ram who is against our workers. Harjinder's is the latest in the series of cases of police atrocities against KKU workers." A month before the Amritsar police arrested Harjinder, his two brothers, Manjit Singh and Ranjit Singh, both members of the KKU who were detained at the Gharinda police station for a week and a month respectively. Explained Mann: "There was no case against any of them."

Jagtar Singh Mahilinwala, general secretary of the district unit of the KKU is one among the victims. He said, "Police arrested me because they found that my beard was like



Harjinder Singh

Satpal Danish

Bhindranwale's. They kept telling me that during the interrogation." Jagtar Singh was first arrested on 31 July 1984 and released a week later after being tortured. Mann alleged, "The police wanted to kill Jagtar in an encounter. This was after Operation Bluestar and there was no one to listen to us." On 2 April the police rearrested Jagtar Singh. This time they did not torture him physically but, according to the KKU

activist, he was "mentally tortured."

The police brutality has left the KKU activists angry and resentful. The strong feelings against the police are apparent. Asked Mann: "Why should the police arrest us when there is no case against us? Why should the police take us into custody without arrest warrants? Why should the police break our limbs and jaws when we protest against police oppression?" He went on to add, "The police know our policy programme well. We are against terrorism. We were against Bhindranwale and we organised demonstrations against him. Even the eminent Punjabi playwright Gursharan Singh spoke against the Bhindranwale cult from our stages. And we have been working for Hindu-Sikh unity. "Yet, we are suffering at the hands of the police."

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

INTELLIGENCE

A New Role for the CBI

Move to make structural changes in the organisation

After two decades of its existence, a new role is being planned for the government's premier investigation agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Senior officials at the CBI headquarters in New Delhi are at present examining the workings of foreign investigative agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Scotland Yard and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to propose a change in the existing structure of the CBI. Also being examined is the American Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisation Act (RICO) of 1970, for a similar law to be passed in India to deal with underground leaders and narcotics syndicates. The high-level secretaries committee headed by cabinet secretary P.K. Kaul which has been asked to study the role of the CBI would also be examining the earlier recommendations made in the 65th report of the estimates committee of Parliament (1983-84) which had criticised the CBI's performance and suggested that it's "role, functions and working...should be comprehensively reviewed and measures taken to tone up its working."

The estimates committee report presented in the Lok Sabha on 12 April 1984 said that the CBI had "failed to make a significant dent on the problem of corruption...the deterrent effect of the CBI has not been

felt and in fact corruption has substantially increased." The report suggested that it should be examined whether the CBI at present, has the expertise and capacity to tackle the present level of corruption.

According to the CBI director, Mohan Katre, the CBI's role would be evolved after a careful scrutiny of intelligence agencies in other countries and the peculiar nature of policing in India. The CBI (constituted in 1963 under the Delhi Police Establishment Act) has powers of jurisdiction concurrent with the state police to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption. However, the CBI's activities are confined to cases involving employees of the central government and its undertakings and matters of interest to the central government. Under the existing constitutional guidelines it is the responsibility of the state governments and state police departments to deal with the problem of corruption in their respective states. The CBI has to request the state police department for permission to investigate any case beyond its jurisdiction. There have been instances when the concurrence for the CBI to investigate cases of corruption in some non-Congress(I) ruled states as in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in 1977 have been withdrawn, thereby curtailing the powers of the CBI to a large

extent. The director pointed out that the lack of jurisdiction of the CBI while investigating cases concerning state governments is one of the impediments in the effective working of the organisation. Besides, the number of cases being handed over to the CBI has risen steadily to about 1,200 cases a year. While the rate of conviction in CBI cases, he said, has also risen, the speed at which CBI cases are dealt with in the courts has slowed down. There were 1,500 CBI cases before the courts in 1980 but there are 2,200 in 1984.

CBI officials were silent about whether a constitutional amendment was in the offing to increase the jurisdiction of the CBI for investigating cases of corruption in all states and union territories. It is believed that senior constitutional experts and the attorney general, K. Parasaran, have been approached for their views on the subject. The matter of an expanded role for the CBI was also taken up at the three-day conference of CBI officials and heads of anti-corruption agencies of states and union territories held in New Delhi from 4 July and addressed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The conference was a useful occasion for the various state intelligence agencies to discuss the subject of jurisdiction of the CBI in the states and union territories and also for the examination of the charter of its foreign counterparts. The results of the conference and the recommendations of the estimates committee are now before the cabinet secretaries committee to decide what fresh powers of jurisdiction the CBI will be given.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

MEDIA

Editor Under Siege

Ashwini Minna faces constant threats to his life

Three-and-a-half-year-old Aditya Minna does not know why he feels uneasy without his armed personal security officer (PSO), Sukhbir Singh. When he sees men with guns around him, he behaves normally. He does not know that his great grandfather, Lala Jagat Narain, and his grandfather, Ramesh Chander, were felled by terrorists' bullets. Nor does he know of the constant threat to his father, Ashwini Minna. But somehow, he realises that life without guns is unsafe. Ashwini Minna wonders what kind of man his son will grow up to be. The child does not go to school like other little boys in the colony, he cannot play with his friends, or go out with his parents, or even look out of the windows very often. Life for Aditya, is a closed room with a gunman standing guard.

Ashwini Minna had once decided to send his son to a nursery school. "But my friends warned me against taking such a big risk...as two persons in the family have been killed," he says. Aditya stays indoors, like his parents under heavy guard. In the last one year, says Minna, he has ventured out of the house just three or four times. Occasionally, he runs to the second floor terrace for a breath of fresh air. That too is considered dangerous by the security personnel. There are houses all around, the assassin could be hiding anywhere close by.

House number BN/39, Poorvi Shalimar Bagh, apart from the Prime Minister's house, is the most protected private residence in New Delhi. Commandos of the Special Task Force are on duty round the clock. In front of the house sit half a dozen armed guards while others patrol the road behind the house or keep watch from the terrace. There are in all 20 of them. Besides, Minna

has his personal guards. The moment anyone enters the lane leading to Minna's house, he is under the "range" of automatic weapons and is keenly watched. Strangers are often turned back. The commandos have orders to deal firmly with everyone. If there is no prior appointment, one may even be told that Ashwini Minna does not live there. And if an appointment has been made, credentials are checked. "Who are you?



Ashwini Minna: besieged

Where have you come from? Why do you want to meet Minna *saheb*?" are the usual questions. The questioning over, one of the guards goes over to the booth in front of the house and checks again on the intercom. If there is an appointment, the doors are opened, but not before the person has been thoroughly frisked. While one commando stands with his

gun ready, another does the frisking—right down to the last piece of paper in the wallet. Visitors are escorted up the stairs that lead to Minna's room. Then another guard, waiting above the stairs, takes over. On the first floor is Minna's living room, moderate in size and well-furnished. From the walls hang photographs of Lala Jagat Narain and Ramesh Chander. When this correspondent met him, Ashwini Minna, freshly bathed was relaxing, in a white *pyjama-kurta*. And for the first time the gunmen left this correspondent alone. They were back again when we left the room. "*Haalat ke maare hain, kya kare?* (We are victims of circumstances, what can we

do?)" he says smiling. His father and grandfather, both editors of the *Punjab Kesari* before him, were killed by terrorists in Punjab for the stand the newspaper had taken on politics in the state. Ashwini Minna, though only 27 years old, took over after his father's assassination on 12 May 1984. The threats began coming in soon. "I receive almost half a dozen every day...I know some of them are fake but many do mean business, I can make out. They killed my grandfather and my father, they could kill me. I have not shifted an inch from the stand they took."

After they killed his father last year, a number of friends and relatives suggested him to close down the newspaper and do something else. "What is the use," they argued, "why jeopardise the lives of all the family members?" "*Lekin main geedar kaise ban jaata?* (But how could I become such a coward?)" says Minna. He took up the editorship

of the paper and paid the price he knew he would have to. He leads a cloistered life, confined to his fortress: a husband who cannot take out his wife in the evening, a father who cannot play with his son, an editor who cannot go over to his press.

Till a few years ago, Ashwini Minna wanted to be a professional cricketer, and was a promising leg-

UTTAR PRADESH

Uproar Over Urdu

Controversial statement by minister on language issue

spin bowler. He then joined the family newspaper deciding to be an investigative reporter. "I was very young then, I am still young but I have been condemned to writing editorials from a desk in this house." Minna edits the *Punjab Kesari* from a small table in his bedroom. On it, among files and papers, is a writing pad and a pencil. On a wall, near the desk hang a rifle, a revolver and a carbine that he has recently purchased from the United States. They are all loaded. "When they come for me, and I know they will, I will be ready to face them. I have seen death, I no longer dread it." Just a few days after his father's assassination, an attempt was made on Minna's life outside his office in Jalandhar. Had the would-be assassin's sten gun not been jammed, Minna would have been dead. "Do you think," he asks, "I would have taken up the editorship of this paper if I was afraid?" He is resigned to leading the kind of life that he is. Nothing matters, as long as he is doing what his predecessors did. This, he said, is his only mission in life. Minna spoke about how the problems in Punjab began and how his paper had constantly appealed for the timely intervention of New Delhi. "But the Congress was playing a power game then I have seen with my own eyes local Congressmen doing Bhindranwale's work, aiding him, propping him up against the Akalis. We appealed time and again through our newspaper but nobody listened." Within no time, his family had got involved in the Punjab problem. The killing of Lala Jagat Narain and Ramesh Chander only pushed the family deeper into the crisis.

Minna is proud of his family's recent record and his status as the only man other than the Prime Minister to be protected by the Special Task Force commandos. Even Buta Singh is not so well-guarded. But then he never willed it. Minna loves driving. "I have a beautiful car but I cannot drive it," he says. Then suddenly, flush with excitement, he told this correspondent, "You have come, let us go out for a drive. Let us have a *paan* from the market. You are a good excuse for me to move out." The security personnel bring out his car; one of them, rechecking his guns, jumps into the rear seat. The windows are pulled up and off goes Minna, happy as a lark, enjoying these rare moments. Will life ever return to normal for him? "No," says he, "I have to live this way and I will." Back home, on his desk, Minna has a poster which says "Don't Quit." Minna is not likely to.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

If Urdu is made the second official language (of Uttar Pradesh) it will pave the way for another partition of the country." The statement was made by Vasudeo Singh, the minister for food and civil supplies of Uttar Pradesh and was published by *Jansatta*, an Indian Express publication. The statement contradicts the Congress(I) election manifesto which pledges that Urdu would be made the second official language and has begun a major controversy in the state.

Vasudeo Singh's first salvo was fired at a meeting of Hindi enthusiasts assembled to celebrate the "Hindi Patrakarita Divas." He talked about "cowardice of the guardians of Hindi and the planned aggression" of the men of the Urdu Academy and



Vasudeo Singh: anti-Urdu

asked the former to curb their "aggression." On another occasion, he had suggested that the Urdu Academy office-bearers who demand Urdu to be recognised as the second official language be taken round the city on donkeys' backs after blackening their faces. The trade has provoked the Urdu Academy executive members including Begum Habibullah, its president and Rainlal, its vice-president, to send in their resignations to chief minister N. D. Tiwari, as a protest against Vasudeo Singh's "irresponsible utterances against the Urdu language and the Urdu Academy."

The minister's ire against Urdu is nothing new. In 1984, when minister Ammar Rizvi introduced a bill in the House seeking to make Urdu the second official language, Vasudeo

Singh had objected saying that the state Assembly was not competent enough to legislate on the subject. Some other members of the ruling party also supported him and eventually the bill was withdrawn. Yet, the UP government has promulgated four ordinances in the past virtually making Urdu the second official language. Asked why the government did not take a definite decision, a senior Congress(I) leader said, "Our leaders make adhoc arrangements when the matter heats up or the elections are near, otherwise, most of them wish to help it to meet its natural death just by default." It appears that in the faction-ridden Congress(I) party in UP, the Hindi fanatics are a major force and making Urdu the second official language could lead to more infighting in the party.

In a recent article in the *Navbharat Times*, Vasudeo Singh stated that Article 347 of the Constitution which provides for the granting of official status to another language if the President of India "is satisfied that a substantial proportion of a population of a state desires the use of any language chosen by them," has become obsolete as the President has already decided on the issue in 1960 in favour of Hindi. Evidently, the minister is trying to mislead his opponents. The Constitution clearly stipulates that this Article would become operative "on a demand made on that behalf." It may be recalled that it was after 1960 that Urdu had been granted the status of second official language in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Vasudeo Singh's utterances have invited heavy criticism. The National Federation of Progressive Writers has in a letter to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi appealed for immediate steps in UP to defuse the dangerous situation created by Vasudeo Singh and the acceptance of the just demand of the Urdu speaking people of the state. They have also demanded the removal of Vasudeo Singh from the council of ministers. Meetings and signature campaigns in support of Urdu and the removal of the minister have begun. A delegation of Hindi and Urdu writers has also met the UP chief minister N. D. Tewari, with identical demands.

Rajeev Saxena, New Delhi

RAJASTHAN

Revelry at Public Expense

Government pays for bureaucrat's wedding anniversary

The chief secretary of Rajasthan lavishly celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary on 19 December last year. The expenses which came up to at least Rs 60,000 including expenses for liquor, food and entertainment were met by the state government. The government's involvement has been, till recently, a well kept secret and it was only recently and that too by accident that SUNDAY learnt about the incident. It was former chief minister of Rajasthan Shiv Charan Mathur who had made Mr Lal the chief secretary (CS) after superseding a number of senior bureaucrats. What went in his favour was the fact that he like Mr Mathur, was a *kayastha*.

To make the arrangements for the wedding anniversary as lavish as possible, number of high officials and other employees from at least half a dozen departments worked round the clock for over a week under the personal supervision of Mr Lal and his wife. The whole programme was meticulously planned with the help of officials and attention was paid to minute details such as how the CS and his wife would arrive on the scene, which officials would wait to greet the couple, what tunes would be played etc.

Anand Mohan Lal even lost his temper when the public works department officials expressed their inability to lay carpets on the drive in inside the CS's bungalow before his wedding anniversary since the department's vans had been sent on election duty. The chief secretary ordered the district returning officer and the district magistrate of Jaipur to instantly release the vans. Subsequently four of them were withdrawn from election duty and sent back to enable the PWD staff to finish their work in time.

A meeting of top officials of the department of tourism was called by the chief secretary to discuss the anniversary celebrations. The department was entrusted with the job of presenting a special light and sound programme for entertaining the guests. Some cultural troupes were hired for the performance. The decoration and sitting arrangements were entrusted to the PWD and local police officials were called in to discuss traffic arrangements. The

catering arrangements were handled by the state hotel and the excise department officials were told to provide liquor for the guests.

The excise department officials had arranged for the liquor including imported whisky. Though the service conduct rules prohibit drinking and the serving of liquor by government officials, the rule was violated by the chief secretary in the presence of the state Governor. The liquor, con-

Col Bhawani Singh and his wife Maharani Padmini.

For the occasion the department of tourism had arranged a son et lumiere depicting various styles of Rajasthani marriages. About 50 artists of Natya Niketan enacted weddings among the Rajputs, the tribals and the Baniyas. Marriage processions were taken out and camels bullock carts horses, palanquins for the shows were arranged by the tourism department. Dance programmes reminiscent of the *mujrahs* in princely *darbars* were also performed. The tourism department paid about Rs 25,000 for these programmes. Besides, it spent Rs 10,000 on hiring of camels, horses, bullock carts, costumes, musicians, a sound



The chief secretary Anand Mohan Lal (centre) during the party

sumed by the guests would have cost at least Rs 6,000. Mr Lal, despite the impending Lok Sabha elections spent hours every day, personally going over the plans and checking the progress of each department. Mr and Mrs Lal were present at all the rehearsals of the special sound and light programme at their residence held on three consecutive days.

The whole bungalow was lit up on the day of the anniversary. The public works department had constructed a large number of fireplaces under the *shamiana* put up for the guests and officials from the state tourism, PWD, police, excise, water works and electricity departments attended to the guests. About 300 guests including leading business men, industrialists, doctors, lawyers and bureaucrats were invited. Among the guests were the Governor O P Mehra and his wife Mrs Satya Mehra, the ex maharaja of Jaipur,

system and the decorators. Even the electrician's bill was paid by the tourism department. The running commentary during the programmes was given by the chief secretary himself.

The guests were also served the choicest food. Gaily decorated stalls were set up for serving *chaats*, ice creams and hot *jalebis*. The lavish dinner according to one invitee, could have cost at least Rs 50 to 60 per person at the state hotel. Considering that 300 guests were invited at least Rs 18,000 must have been spent. The state hotel not only served the food outside the hotel premises (a case of violation of the hotel rules) but also served it free of cost. No bill was prepared and no payment was made. Besides, the chief secretary flouted the guest control order which prohibits anyone from entertaining more than 100 guests at a time.

MR Kap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR

A Disputed Election

Political uncertainty prevails in the area

A government was formed in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC) after elections held there recently. However, reports from across the border indicate that political uncertainty still prevails in the state. Political parties and groups excluding the AJKMC have refused to recognise the 15 May elections which, they allege, were rigged on a large scale. They even claim that the AJKMC had made a secret deal with the rulers in Muzaffarabad, the capital of "Azad Kashmir" and that they would rule with directives from "their masters." On the eve of the elections, the authorities had issued an ordinance declaring that a political party would forfeit the Assembly seats that it would win unless it received at least 12.5 per cent of the total votes cast, with five per cent in each of the six electoral districts. This ordinance is said to have been to favour the AJKMC and was challenged at the "Azad Kashmir" High Court by three political parties: the Jammu and Kashmir Therik-E-Ammal, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. These parties had won eight, four and two seats respectively in these elections but failed to get the required number of seats to make the mark.

Unlike in Pakistan, elections in POK were held on a party basis but the authorities have decreed that all political parties would have to be

registered before contesting the elections. Most political parties were debarred from contesting when they failed to register themselves. Although the POK unit of the Pakistan People's Party and the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front had formed a united front with six small parties to boycott the 15 May elections—which, for them was "a fraud on the people of Azad Kashmir"—and were also joined by Pakistan's Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD), a large number of voters turned up on polling day as the territory had not seen any election for over a decade.

The "legislative assembly" is a 42 member house with 40 members elected through direct franchise and two nominated women members. 28 members are chosen from the occupied territory excluding Gilgit and Scardu which, Islamabad claims, are Pakistan's "northern area", and the remaining twelve are elected by refugees from Jammu and Kashmir now settled in various parts of Pakistan. The voting ratio shows that the refugees have favoured political parties in these elections.

The AJKMC has formed a government with Sardar Hayat Khan who is the party president, as the prime minister. It is believed in POK political circles that Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, a patron of AJKMC who served the territory as president twice, may not join the government this time.

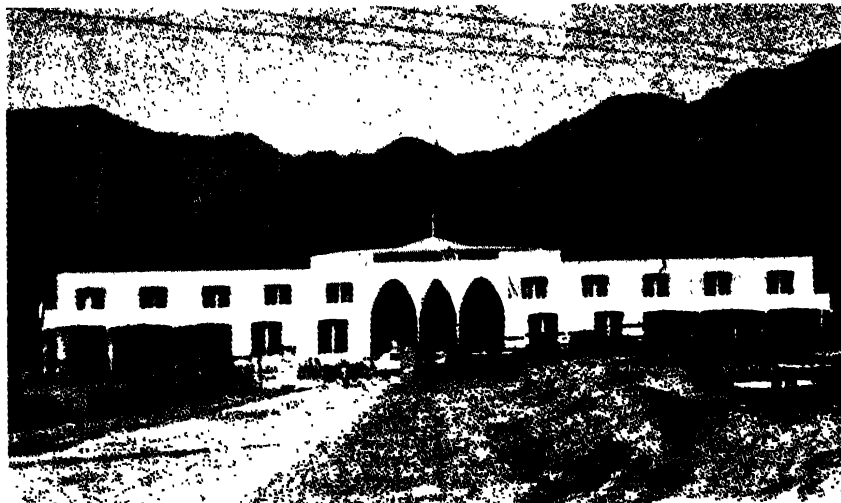
Denial of democratic rights, the

growing economic problems of the people and of course Kashmiri relationship with India as well as Pakistan, dominated the poll scene. While the JKLL and its progressive allies wanted the present status of Kashmir especially the POK-Pakistan ties to be reviewed, the AJKMC made the "state's accession to Pakistan," its main poll issue. It spoke of an "active struggle to seek Indian held Kashmir's liberation." The AMC also spoke of the state's accession to Pakistan but during its campaign it also criticised Islamabad for eroding POK's autonomy and thrusting stooges upon the people of the territory. The leader of the AMC, Sultan Mahmood, would declare at his election meetings: "Khalistan leader Jagjit Singh Chohan is my friend. We should help the Sikhs in their struggle for Khalistan." However, because of his half-hearted election campaign many have deserted him. The AMC could win only two seats including that of the Sultan in spite of spending huge sums for the elections. The JKAP was mainly supported by the community to which its leader Brigadier (Retired) Muhammad Bhayat Khan, a former president of the territory, belongs.

The POK Interim Constitution Act of 1974 also figured during the elections. The act debars a member from becoming a prime minister when he fails to uphold the idea of the state's accession to Pakistan. This has been widely criticised particularly by the JKPF and contrary to the official statements, the election scene in POK was far from peaceful.

Political parties other than AJKMC have not accepted the 15 May election in principle. They all agree that the only fair election in POK was the one held in 1970, which was the first direct election in the territory since 1947. After the elections in 1970 Islamabad lost little time to oust the duly elected government of AJKMC in order to pave the way for the then powerful party of Pakistan, the Pakistan People's Party which eventually took over the reins from the AJKMC. The 1975 elections were held according to the wishes of the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. His party easily swept the polls when the AJKMC and some other parties boycotted it. But the victorious party was paid in its own coins when its government was dismissed two years later, following the coup staged by General Zia-ul-Haq. And now, whether the present AJKMC government will be able to complete its five-year term or the opposition will succeed in its determination to topple it, has to be seen.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar



The Assembly building in Muzaffarabad

BUSINESS

An Amazing About-turn

Workers participation brings success to a firm in Rajasthan

The chronically sick Jaipur Metals and Electricals Ltd (JME), which was on the verge of liquidation only a year ago is on its way to recovery. The 1,500 workers threatened with unemployment are now poised to become the JME's owners and workers' participation in management at last has been translated into a reality. The JME was set up by the house of the Kamanis in 1943 to manufacture non ferrous metals and alloys and later entered into a collaboration with the Japanese to make electric power meters. Considered to be symbols of precision by the company, the meters earned good profits.

After the year 1971-72, however, family feuds and mismanagement saw losses accumulating to the extent of Rs 74 lakhs. In June 1977, the Kamanis proposed the voluntary liquidation of the company. The shareholders, however, did not agree and instead formed a managing committee consisting of representatives of the state government and other financing agencies who had a stake in the company. The state government declared the JME a relief

undertaking and appointed an IAS officer as its managing director. In the next six years there was little improvement and by January 1984, accumulated losses reached Rs five crores besides uncovered liabilities to the extent of Rs 11.3 crores against the total shareholders' capital and reserves of Rs 1.71 crores. Liquidation seemed inevitable.

At that time, I.S. Kavadia was appointed the managing director. When Kavadia took over, the company's finances were in poor shape and even payment of wages was a big problem. Bankers were reluctant to provide any further assistance, the company had lost all the credibility in the market and labour relations were deteriorating. Production touched the rock bottom level. Products were rejected by the buyers because of poor quality and because supply schedules were not maintained. Kavadia, however, took up the challenge. "I did not want to be the author of the company's liquidation," Kavadia told SUNDAY. The only way out, he felt, was dedication and hard work by all employees.

Kavadia adopted a novel technique of dealing with the situation. Before the unions could put demands before him, he issued a nine-point 'charter of demands' to the workers in December 1983. The move was strongly resisted by the workers union as it envisaged a voluntary wage freeze for five years for all employees, the revision of production norms, production-linked wages, wage cuts, if production targets were not reached, increased working hours, a total ban on go-slows, strikes, provision of overtime and other allowances. The charter of demands also included 20 per cent bonus only in case of profits and that too in the form of equity shares in the company and retrenchment of superannuated and other surplus staff. With the unit's closure almost imminent, the new MD succeeded in persuading the union leaders to agree to the proposal. All workers signed the agreement by 11 January 1985.

In the year ending 31 March 1985, the JME produced 5.68 lakh meters, an all time record as against the 3.05 lakh meters in the previous year. Production figures of other items too went up. The total turnover of Rs 11.42 crores in 1984-85 was the highest recorded by the company. As against a loss of Rs 1.34 crores in 1983-84, the company earned a profit of Rs 90.65 lakhs in 1984-85 and that too after providing Rs 11 lakhs as a share in profits for the workers.

How do the workers feel about the experiment? Leaders from all three unions—Gordhan Pareek (INTUC), Mohanlal Verma (BMS) and Saligram (AITUC) said that there was stiff opposition to the management's suggestion initially and senior union leaders were averse to the idea of a wage freeze and the ban on strikes. The idea of workers obtaining shares in the company through profit sharing was ridiculed as the company had accumulated liabilities to the extent of Rs 17 crores. The union leaders, however, said that they knew that the workers' future was linked with the company's welfare.

As another labour leader said, the JME experiment has given birth to a new sector in the Indian economy—the workers' sector. "So far there used to be only private, public or joint sectors. We have now added the workers' sector." The workers fear that the government may give back the company to its original management after it fully recovers. But Kavadia disagrees. By the end of the current year the workers would have secured the largest number of shares. The decision about the future of the company would then be taken by the workers themselves.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

Air Chief Marshal L. M. Katre (1927-1985)



Air Chief Marshal Laxman M. Katre was the second chief of the Indian Air Force to pass away in harness (after Air Marshal Subroto Mukherjee) when he died of a heart attack on the morning of 1 July. He was one of the most outstanding fighter pilots and had proved his mettle in the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said "His death leaves a void difficult to fill."

Undaunted Crusader

Soft-spoken, bearded Dr Anil Sadgopal, a doctorate in microbiology from California Institute of Technology, is a man the Madhya Pradesh government loves to hate. Almost a hero in Bhopal, Dr Sadgopal has been at the head of the campaign launched by the *Zehri Gas Kand Morcha* against the callous attitude of the government towards the victims of the gas leak tragedy. After his education abroad, Sadgopal joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR). But his craving for social work led him to quit

TIFR and set up home in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh—also a centre for rural education called Kishore Bharati, which has become a popular place for scientific education in the area. With the ghastly gas leak at Bhopal last December, Sadgopal found himself in the midst of an agitation for the rights of those affected. Searched, harassed, warned, beaten and abused by the police, his agitation goes on. He would not leave Bhopal—not until the demands of the *morcha* have been fulfilled.

Dancing to Glory

At a glittering ceremony on 15 June in New York, dancer Indrani Rahman was honoured by the Association of Indians in America for her contribution in the field of art. The previous recipients of this award are the sitar guru Pandit Ravi Shankar and music maestro

Zubin Mehta. A leading exponent of the Bharatanatyam, she has been performing all over the United States and teaching the intricacies of the dance at Harvard and New York University. For the last few years she has also been teaching at Juilliard School in New York, the most prestigious performing art school in America. Needless to say, her achievements have brought her many rewards. In the Seventies, John Lindsay, the mayor of New York, had presented her with the key to the city. The public will get a glimpse of her *mudras* at the Festival of India where she is scheduled to perform with her daughter Sukanya.



Indrani Rahman

Looking for a Double

The competition is tough but popular TV hostess (Whats the good word?) Sabira Merchant hopes to get the role of a lifetime—that of Mrs Indira Gandhi in a film being made by French producer Judith de Paul, who has just completed a film on Lord Mountbatten. According to Ms Merchant, de Paul who admired the former Indian



Sabira Merchant as Indira Gandhi

USA's Tribute to the Saint



President Reagan presenting the medal to Mother Teresa

The "Saint of the gutter," as US President Ronald Reagan calls Mother Teresa, received the highest civilian award of the USA, the President's Medal of Freedom, on 20 June for her work among the poor and desti-

tutes of Calcutta. The US President had a light-hearted comment to make while presenting the award at the White House Rose Garden—that the Nobel prize winner melt the medal to raise funds to help the poor.

Chipko in Mexico

The Chipko movement of India recently reached the distant lands of Mexico through a special invitee Sundarlal Bahuguna, who was in the Indian delegation which participated in the World Forestry Congress held in that country. The austere team of renowned foresters and environmentalists who participated in the Congress must have been surprised to find in their midst, the revolutionary

and unconventional environmentalist of the modern age, popularly known as "Mr Chipko" Bahuguna. He went to Mexico armed with his unique thesis on forestry: the three "Ps" responsible for the destruction of precious forests were paddy, pulp and plywood, while his alternate concept for the development of trees were the three "As"—austerity, alternatives and afforestation.

Prime Minister, decided to make a film on her after the assassination. And among those being considered to play the lead role is the petite Sabira Merchant. In order to strengthen her case, the aspiring actress applied some light make, dyed her hair to resemble Indira Gandhi, had a video recording done, and—packed it off to the producer along with her bio data. Ms Merchant hopes she will get the role, especially since the producer is not looking for an established Indian actress.

The popular BBC TV series *Yes Minister* discontinued by Doordarshan last year on the ground that its viewership wasn't large enough is now being translated into — hold your breath — Urdu. BBC radio hopes that this will gain millions of more fans for the programme no. 1. It will be broadcast on their world service, listeners in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh can tune in later this month. So Sir Humphrey Appleby that unflappable permanent under secretary to minister Jim Hacker will no longer be heard saying 'Yes, Minister'. What will it be instead — *Bajaa Ishad*?

Most people agree that *Barister Vinod* is a definite improvement on the idiotic *Apradhi Kaun*? There's a general consensus that Parikshat Sahni suits the character of the suave urbane slick haired, dinner jacket clad pipe smoking barrister to a T. This could be a good break for Parikshat, who (unlike his illustrious father Balraj) was never able to make the grade in Hindi films. If Parikshat clicks as the Indian counterpart of Perry Mason, Hindi cinema is sure to give him the same warm welcome they provided to Swaroop Sampat and Shafi Inamdar.



Parikshat Sahni

The Small Screen

Swaroop and Shafi fans will be delighted to know that the two stars who raised *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* to dizzy heights of popularity will be returning to the serial for the last few episodes. Yes, the long running *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* is finally being terminated. The end date is said to be some time in October and the producers have managed to persuade Shafi and Swaroop to spare time from their film schedules and grace the final few episodes with their presence.

Good news for jazz enthusiasts and Hindi film haters. If you enjoy jazz and loathe the Sunday film tune in next Sunday at 7.30 pm and treat yourself to a melodious session consisting of choice recordings of last year's *Jazz Yatra* interspersed with music from *Pop in Get* many highly recommended for western music buffs.

Sai Paranjpye didn't create much of an impact as a director with her debut making TV serial, *Ados Pados*. Nobody was very impressed or entertained, and the serial looks as though it's going to fold any day now. But the indomitable Sai is already busy with plans for her next comedy serial, to be called *Dadagiri*, which deals with the hilarious antics of a couple of grandparents and their granddaughter, to be played by none other than Sai's daughter Winnie.

With serials getting increasingly popular, every second person these days seems to be directing one. Avesha Sayani, who once made a children's feature film (*Hungama Bom*



Swaroop Sampat

bay Ishtyle is now in the process of directing a serial for Doordarshan. So is Shekhar Kapoor who made movies like *Masoom*. As for commentator Pratap Sharma, he's gone one step further by directing a TV serial for BBC TV's Channel 4.



Sai Paranjpye

Doordarshan has finally realised that it needs to pep up its *World of Sport* programme on Sundays. It has begun by introducing a Delhi based panel of experts to add authenticity to the programme. For the first time Doordarshan is openly wooing sponsors to finance *World of Sport*. If they succeed, viewers can anticipate exciting sports coverage.

Why does Doordarshan persist in screening tepid uninspiring programmes like *Let's Face It* (second channel)? The last discussion shown on this programme *A Breath in Bombay* droned endlessly about industrial pollution, carbon monoxide from slums, etc., but carefully avoided providing any constructive suggestions or alternatives. Doordarshan has a happy knack of turning ever relevant contemporary urban issues into boring stuff.

Obesity: A Health Hazard

Among the Moors of Mauritania and northern Mali, a man's importance is measured by the waistline of his wife, and beauty is proportional to weight. Thus in the Nema Valley of southern Mauritania, force-feeding centres were set up to meet the demand for obese marriageable girls. *World Health*, a magazine published by the WHO, draws attention to the hazards of these customs. In western countries, gross obesity has been known to cause hypoxia from sudden respiratory failure. But greater damage stems from the chronic ill health caused by hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, gall bladder diseases, varicose veins, colonic troubles and arthritis, which may be a result of obesity. The very fat like the very thin women have problems with hormone balance which can result in hirsutism and menstrual irregularities. These changes may account for the increased incidence of cancer of the breast and uterus.

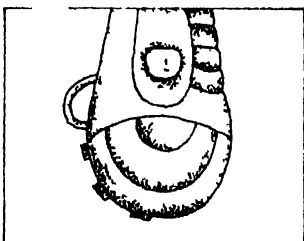


Problematic Habit

A report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* indicates that smoking is one of the causes of relative infertility. A study on the relationship between smoking and conception in 700 women has shown a clear link between the two. The report said that 38 per cent of women who were non-smokers conceived as soon as they stopped using contraceptives while the figure for smokers was 20 per cent. In any cycle, smoking reduced the chances of conception by approximately a third. The difficulty in conceiving was related to the number of cigarettes smoked.

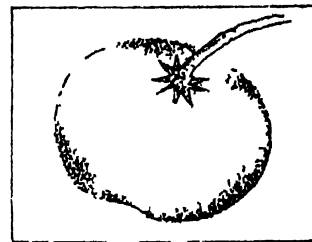
Jogging: Computer Style

Aidas has come up with the Micropacci—jogging shoes for men with a computer attached to the tongue of the left shoe and a price tag of \$125. The computer looks like a digital stopwatch and is connected by a wire to a sensor in the sole of the shoe under the big toe. Before jogging, a runner enters his stride length which is recorded along with his weight by pressing two buttons on the computer. The computer then records every stride. Later, the jogger can check how far he has run, how long it has taken him, his average speed and how many calories he has used up. Another computerised shoe by Puma, will be available later this year for \$200. It includes a disc for an Apple II or Commodore 64 and a cable to connect the tiny computer in the shoe to a larger computer with the disc in it. After a run, one end of the cable is plugged into an outlet on the back of the right shoe and the other end is connected to the computer. The big computer then drains information from the little computer and plots distance, time and speed on a graph.



Tests for Tasty Tomatoes

The flavour of the tomato differs from one variety to another and depends on its ripeness. But Deborah Wright and Natholyn Harris of Florida State University, USA, think that large amounts of fertiliser might be responsible for the tomato's increasing blandness. They designed an experiment in which tomatoes were grown under three sets of conditions. One group of plants received a relatively modest ration of fertilisers per week (100 pound per acre nitrogen, 150 pound per acre potassium), the second was given double that amount and the third received a triple dose. The scientists trained 16 volunteers to monitor taste. Tomatoes grown in the first set of conditions were highly rated while those grown with medium and heavy doses of fertilisers received low marks. Which chemicals help taste buds to identify the flavour of the tomatoes? It is often said that citric and malic acids are vital factors and so is sugar. However the scientists are sceptical of this viewpoint because the levels of sugar and acids in the tomatoes rose with the increasing doses of fertilisers, whereas flavour declined.

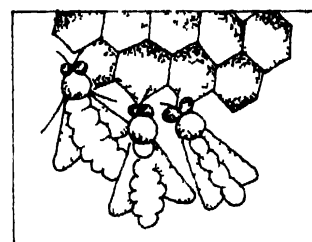


Towards Better Information

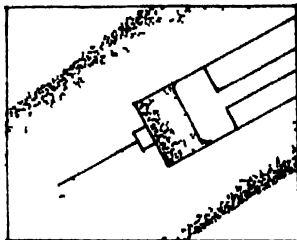
Researchers at the Rhode Island, USA, have found that volunteers scored seven per cent lower on reading comprehension tests that were presented on computer screens as opposed to printed tests. The study found that those who took the test understood both versions. Frank A. Jeppner, a professor of zoology, said he undertook the study because he was concerned that computerising information may dramatically reduce the amount of information people can read. Fifty-five volunteers took a standardised reading test, half of which was in print and the rest on a computer. The average reader scored seven per cent lower on the computerised version and people who were unfamiliar with computers scored an average of 23 per cent lower.

Honey: The Boon for Babies

Honey may be the best antidote for babies who have severe diarrhoea which can be a killer particularly for children who are malnourished. But the deaths are not caused directly by bacteria which lead to diarrhoea. It is the massive loss of body fluids and essential sugars and nutrients from the stomach that weakens children. A study from Durban, South Africa published in *British Medical Journal*, has shown that honey is more effective in treating diarrhoea. Part of the success is because honey actually kills bacteria; it also contains sodium and potassium, essential minerals for keeping babies alive. Care must be taken to see that the honey solution contains sufficient quantities of these minerals.



Hormone to the Rescue



One of the complex molecules in the brain belonging to the family of chemical messengers may help wean drug addicts away from heroin. The substance is adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH). Laboratory tests showed that injections of endorphin (a hormone occurring naturally in the brain) produced a state of drug dependence as acute as that of morphine but when the same substance synthesised naturally in the body, it did not cause any damage. The research into ACTH, which is being led by Dr Colin Hendrie of Bradford University, has shown many alterations in behaviour that are in direct contrast to the pain killing endorphins. ACTH stimulates sexual behaviour and heightens awareness whereas endorphin is a powerful analgesic. When drug addicts stop taking heroin the opiate level in the brain falls but ACTH remains high. And it is those high levels of ACTH that cause the super sensitivity to pain, cramps, tremors and sweating. Dr Hendrie also believes that withdrawal symptoms are prolonged because high ACTH levels inhibit production of natural opiates which would sedate the system and alleviate the symptoms. Help may be at hand by using the drug Naloxane to combat the opiate problem.

Combating Malaria

The answer has been found to a question that was asked for at least 50 years: we now know that the tiny parasite that causes human malaria has seven chromosomes in its single cell. The same technique is now being applied to other parasites and is expected to lead to new ideas on conquering some of the worst diseases in the world.

In some parts of the world, the malaria parasite is also known to have developed resistance to drugs that used to kill it. Though there is still no way to predict the spread of drug resistance, it is said that the development of the trait can be attributed to a particular chromosome. It can then be isolated and experimented upon to trace the gene which is involved and to study how resistance can be controlled. In fact, an Australian group of scientists have been able to determine on which of the seven chromosomes are located the genes for four different proteins that might be the basis of the vaccine.

Quinoa: The High-protein Grain

A high protein grain cultivated for centuries by Inca tribes in the Andes could help solve hunger problems in Third World countries, according to a US group that is marketing it. A recent study by Texas A&M University said, quinoa was "about 18 per cent high quality protein" and "superior in food value to most other grains in the world." Wheat contains 11 per cent protein and corn 3.5 per cent. "Quinoa can be grown in places with extremely poor soil and where malnutrition is rampant."

Headache ?



The one solution ANACIN

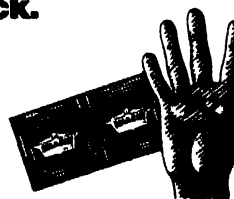
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Effective for the aches and pains of colds and flu, headache, toothache, backache and muscular pain.

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G.M. 2-R-84

VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 14 JULY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May)

Businessmen should proceed with fresh investments as new opportunities open up this week. Professionals are advised to maintain good relations with their seniors. Students will be successful in examinations. However, do not indulge in speculation. A favourable week for romance and your family life will be peaceful. A pleasure trip is in the offing.

Good dates 15, 16 and 17

Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 5

Favourable direction South



LEO (15 August—14 September)

Financially this is a good week for you. Deal diplomatically with friends and colleagues and do not enter into unnecessary arguments. This is a favourable phase for artists and sportsmen. Lovers will also find this a lucky time. However, do not involve yourself in legal matters. A letter will bring unexpected good tidings towards the end of the week.

Good dates 14, 17 and 19

Lucky numbers 3, 6 and 9

Favourable direction North



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January)

This week the domestic front will remain calm but avoid arguments with elders in the family. Businessmen should not hesitate to take risks. The stars shine brightly on all financial deals finalised during this period. Lovers can go ahead with their marriage plans this week. Those above the age of 50 should be careful about their health.

Good dates 16, 19 and 20

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 7

Favourable direction South east



TAURUS (15 May—14 June)

The domestic front will remain peaceful this week. Those in love and intending to get married should not take impulsive decisions. Your health will add to your worries. The weekend will entail a good deal of expenditure but curb extravagance. The period is good for businessmen. Avoid pleasure trips this week and do not waste time on socialising.

Good dates 14, 16 and 18

Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9

Favourable direction North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October)

Doctors and politicians will find this period favourable. Servicemen may come in for severe criticism from their employers. Some of you may inherit property but do not be extravagant. At home, your children will do well in their examinations. Try and avoid legal problems during this phase. But lovers will find this period favourable.

Good dates 15, 18 and 20

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 8

Favourable direction West



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February)

A week of mixed fortunes lies ahead of you. The domestic front will continue to bother you. Friends and relatives will be working to embarrass you. On the professional front, you may come in for severe criticism from your employers. However, this is a good time to get married. Some of you may gain substantial money.

Good dates 15, 17 and 18

Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9

Favourable direction North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July)

Professionals are advised to be more diligent regarding their work. At home, a member of your family may suddenly fall sick. You will have to borrow money to tide over this lean period. However, this is a favourable period for those in love and waiting to get married. A journey awaits you at the weekend. But do not neglect your health.

Good dates 18, 19 and 20

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 4

Favourable direction East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November)

This is an excellent week and you will progress on all fronts. Those in the public sector will earn the praise of their employers. Those unemployed may find jobs during this period. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business. This phase is also good for lovers. Some of you will inherit property.

Good dates 17, 18 and 19

Lucky numbers 3, 7 and 8

Favourable direction North



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March)

The financial front looks inspiring but avoid extravagance. Lovers will make steady progress. You may suddenly fall sick this week. Social engagements will keep you busy but do not overstrain yourself. This is particularly a successful week for sportsmen. Businessmen and politicians should utilise this favourable period to the utmost.

Good dates 14, 17 and 18

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 8

Favourable direction South west



CANCER (15 July—14 August)

This is a favourable week for those involved in creative work. Your financial prospects look bright. The home front will remain peaceful and your children will be a source of joy. Authors may expect a rewarding week. A fortunate time for those in love. A number of meetings and outings are forecast. But do not neglect your health and avoid spicy food.

Good dates 16, 18 and 20

Lucky numbers 1, 5 and 7

Favourable direction South west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December)

This is an exceptionally favourable week for businessmen and professionals. This is also the ideal time to get married. Creative artists and sportsmen will benefit from this lucky phase. Investments made during this period will fetch rich dividends. However, this is not a good period for politicians and those in love.

Good dates 14, 17 and 18

Lucky numbers 1 and 6

Favourable direction North east



PISCES (15 March—14 April)

The week ahead is extremely lucky for those in love and intending to get married. Pleasant surprises are in store for students. Your financial prospects look bright. Professionals and businessmen will find the going smooth. However, the domestic front is likely to bother you. Keep a vigilant eye on your health and diet and avoid undertaking journeys.

Good dates 15, 16 and 19

Lucky numbers 1, 6 and 8

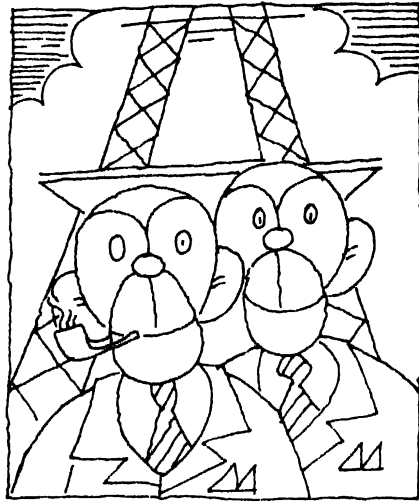
Favourable direction West

For those born between 15 July and 14 August

You are of shy and modest disposition. Though outwardly meek, you possess tremendous self-confidence. Those born during this period have a strong will of their own and cannot be easily swayed by the opinions of others. Leadership quality is inherent in you. Emotional by nature, you tend to be extra-sensitive to things happening around you. You are meticulous in all your actions and always strive towards perfection. Most of you are very interested in business matters. Women born during this period make exceptionally good cooks.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



DELHI Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's entourage on his recent visit to France besides the members of his family and officials included a bear (Munna) two monkeys and 26 journalists. All the 29 members bear and monkeys included, had the stamp of 'journalist' on their passports in the professional column—*The Hindustan Times* (Satya Swaroop Dutt, Jamshedpur)

SURAT Nanubhai Umrabhai is a name that has the rightful claim to be on the *Guinness Book of Records* he has managed to be absent from his job for 858 days and still keeps the job. Nanubhai was, nay, is a "bedlar" at a swimming pool managed by the Surat Municipal Corporation. After he left the pool on 20 April 1978 he returned to work only on 30 June 1980. During this period he had reportedly gone abroad, worked there and made a fortune, before, for some unknown reason, he decided to return to his old job. As suddenly and unceremoniously as he had left the swimming pool over 26 months ago, he walked in on 1 July 1980. After another five years, the question of formally granting his leave for the 858 days came up before the board of the civic body recently. Without much debate, the board sanctioned him 177 days' leave with pay and 681 days' leave without pay. But this made little difference as Nanubhai had already drawn his salary for the 858 days—*Indian Express* (Visalam R. Krishnan New Delhi)

CALCUTTA Police officers on duty at the central gate of Writers' Buildings had a taste of the Empire nostalgia when on 27 June they took great pains to keep a young British tourist away

from the secretariat. According to one of the officers, the man sought to enter the secretariat but he had no pass. When told that he could not enter the building, as it was a "protected place," the tourist, who declared himself to be a Britisher, snapped, "But this was built by my forefathers." However, he had to leave disappointed as the officers did not give in, pointing out that the statute book had nothing to say on his claim—*The Statesman* (Arun Gupta, Calcutta)

BOMBAY Bombay university is in a quandary following the discovery that the dean of the faculty of arts and director of correspondence courses Prof Hemant Wagh, has appeared for an examination conducted by his own department. Prof Wagh, who is also a member of the executive and academic councils of the university, appeared for the diploma in higher education conducted by the department of correspondence courses. According to university sources Prof Wagh should have resigned as dean since in that capacity he was a member of a committee which recommends the appointments of examiners for university examinations—*The Times of India* (B B L Sharma New Delhi)

KOTTAYAM What is your name? "Anumon," says the cat. It doesn't mew but says it clearly in Malayalam. It speaks only when its owner Sujatha, a pre degree student, talks to it. There is yet another condition: it won't speak if anyone stands in front of it. Listeners have to stand behind it for the cat to utter these precious few words. Umma (kiss) Amma (mother) Ammamma (grandmother) Aana (elephant). It also speaks one English word: Good morning. The cat turned into a wonder six months ago. One day Sujatha kissed it casually and said "Umma" and the cat echoed it. Sujatha began to train it and it picked up more words in six months—*Indian Express* (J. Ezekiel Madras)

BELLARY Can a SSLC passed certificate holder in drama teach Kannada to ninth standard students? The authorities of the Government Girls' Junior College seem to think so. Following the transfer of their regular Kannada teacher, they entrusted the task of teaching Kannada to ninth standard students in all the sections to the drama teacher. The decision was especially surprising as the teacher had never taught any subject earlier even to primary school students—*Indian Express* (J. Ravishankar, Bangalore)

WITHOUT COMMENT

I am young and I can wait—Farooq Abdullah on his returning to power in *The Herald Review*

Our paper tigers can roar but cannot win elections—Ashoke Sen referring to Congress(I) leaders having given nominations to anti-social elements for the Calcutta Corporation elections in *The Statesman*

Only responsible people can make responsible statements—Pranab Mukherjee when asked about Ashoke Sen's allegation that wrong nominations for the Calcutta Corporation elections had affected the Congress(I) performance in *Indian Express*

A Sikh does not commit atrocities against anyone. But neither does he bear atrocities. Charan Singh, AISF leader in *The Telegraph*

Accidents don't worry us. They set us thinking—Capt K M Bala Subramaniam, one of the senior most Air India pilots, in *The Sunday Observer*



It was a bad day at the office—Jimmy Connors after losing to Kevin Curren in the Wimbledon semi-finals

I felt old out there today. I kept hoping he'd break his ankle—John McEnroe on being defeated by Kevin Curren in the Wimbledon quarter-finals in *The Telegraph*

My greatest asset is that I don't think—Clint Eastwood in *Life*

VARIETY

Chess

Symmetry is a concept widely misunderstood in chess. The idea that if Black and White copy or virtually copy each other's moves nothing much is going to happen is plausible but wrong.

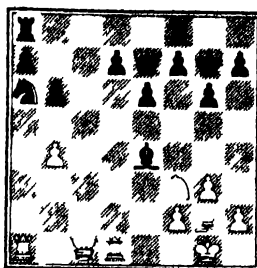
Many positions which are optically almost identical for both sides conceal a very tenuous state of equilibrium. As with the elongated beanstalk carried by high wire artists, the fact that both halves look the same does not imply any great stability within the system.

The dangers lurking near symmetrical positions are illustrated very well by the following game from a recent tournament in Yugoslavia.

White B Ivkov Black Z Illic Réti Opening

1 N-KB3 P-QB4 2 P-B4 N-KB3
3 N-B3 P-QN3 4 P-KN3 B-N2
5 B-N2 P-N3 6 P-N3 B-N27

Already missing the subtleties of the position. The trick 6 P-Q4 7 PxP B-N2



Illic
(Black)

Ivkov
(White)
to move

was discovered by Korchnoi some years ago.

7 B-N2 0-0 8 0-0 N-R3
It is well known that 8 N-B3 9 P-Q4 does not allow Black to equalise.

9 P-Q4 N-K5? A dubious experiment 9 P-Q4 being accepted as best.

10 Q-B1 P-K3 11 R-Q1 Q-K2
It appears surprising but maybe Black is already lost.

12 NxN BxN 13 PxP NxP
14 BxB KxB 15 P-QN4 N-R3

DIAGRAM

16 N-K5 BxB 17 RxP Q-B3
A fruitless adventure but 17 QxP 18 R-N1 Q-B4 19 Q-B3 K-N1 20 R-N5 Q-B1 21 N-N4! is disastrous.

18 N-N4 Q-B4 19 N-K3 Q-K5
20 Q-B3 K-N1 21 P-B3!
Stronger than 21 NxR QxKP. White uses the tempo saved as a springboard to launch a decisive attack.

21 BxP 22 PxR QxKBP
23 R-KB1 Q-K5 24 R-Q4 Q-K4
25 N-N4 Q-N2 26 N-B6 K-R1
27 R-R4 P-R3 28 P-N4 P-KN4
29 R-R5 QR-Q1 30 Q-R3 Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Hands from the final of the women's Olympiad will have been reported at length in the other magazines so will say only that the US brat Rita lost a close match which many think the Brits were unlucky to lose. The deal below was played in an early round between America and Poland.

Dealer South N South table

♠ 9 4 2		♠ 7 6 5
♥ 1 4 8		♥ 7
♦ A K 6 4 2		♦ J 8 3
♣ Q 6		♣ K 8 3 2
♠ J 10	N	♠ 7 6 5
♥ Q 10 6	W	♥ 7
♦ Q 7 5	E	♦ J 8 3
♣ A J 10 5 4	S	♣ K 8 3 2
		♠ A Q 8 3
		♥ A K 4 3 2
		♦ 10 9
		♣ 9 7

The Polish North-South pair bid swiftly to Four Hearts and Gail Moss led the jack of spades which went to the declarer's queen. South played ace and king of diamonds, ruffed a diamond and led a low heart. West gave this a look then played low. According to her own admission she felt a little foolish when dummy's jack held but observe the result. South led a winning diamond from dummy. East ruffed and South discarded a club. The defence can prevail at once if West throws a spade but in fact she signalled in clubs. After ruffing the second club and drawing trumps South had to lose two more tricks. Obviously if West takes the queen of

hearts when offered South will make ten tricks with four hearts, four diamonds and two spades.

At the other table the bidding was

South	North
Radin	Wei
1 ♥	1 ♠
3 ♠	4 ♥
No	

Kathie Wei's choice of One Spade is a Chinese puzzle to me.

Judy Radin showed what had been wrong with the declarer's play at the other table by winning the spade lead, taking three rounds of diamonds then playing ace and another heart. West could make the queen of hearts and two clubs but that was all.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- What is an astrolabe?
- Name the grey substance from the intestine of the sperm whale which is used in the manufacture of perfumes?
- William Tell is a folk hero in which European country?
- What is a blue peter?
- Where is the temple of the tooth located?
- What is the yellow transparent and fossilised remnant of the gum and resin of ancient pine trees called?
- Which country consists of North Island and South Island and is called the Britain of the South?
- Which island did the Vikings call Vinland?
- He was known as Sandrokottas to the Greeks. What do Indians call him?
- In drama what is papering the house?

- Who said 'Beauty is sin deep'?
- The role of Chauncey Gardener in the film *Being There* was the last screen performance by a noted film actor. Name him.
- In test cricket only one bowler has taken five wickets in an innings 25 times. Who?
- How is Catherine Mary Helman better known as?
- The Contras, a guerrilla group in South America, operate in which country?
- In which city in France is the Airbus manufactured?
- In the Mahabharata who was the charioteer of Yudhishtira?
- What is acerology?

- The study of lice
- Toulouse
- Indrasena
- 16 Toulouse

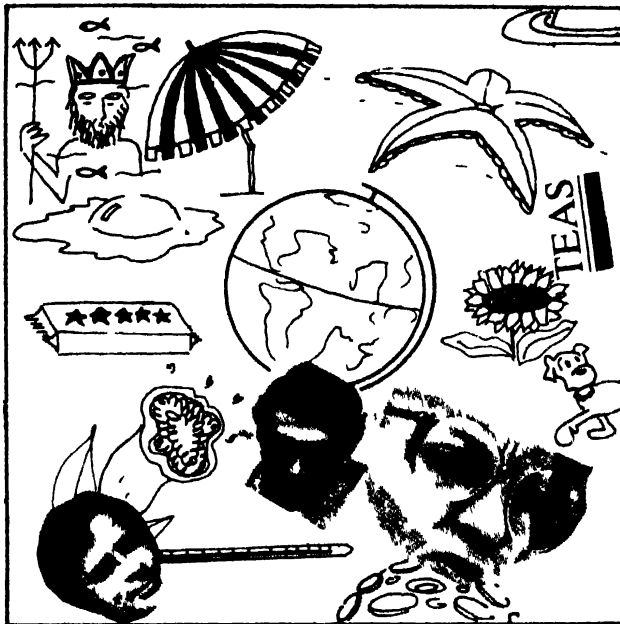
- An instrument used in navigation which was invented by the Arabs in 200 B.C. but has now been replaced by the sextant
- Ambergris
- Switzerland
- A blue flag with a white square in the centre. It is hoisted by a ship when it is about to set sail.
- In Kandy, Sri Lanka
- Amber
- New Zealand
- Newfoundland in Canada
- Chandragupta Maurya
- Giving free tickets to fill up an empty house
- Jean Paul Sartre
- Peter Sellers
- Ian Botham
- Sarla Behn
- Nicaragua

ANSWERS

TEASERS

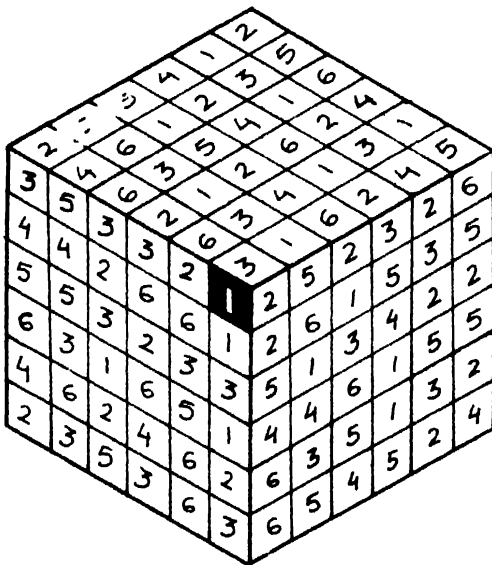
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Figure it Out



Good heavens! Look at all these objects circling the planet earth. Each suggests the name of a celestial body. Can you identify all the celestial bodies they represent?

A-maze-ing



From 2 to 1 is not a long way! On this number cube, though, it is a different matter.

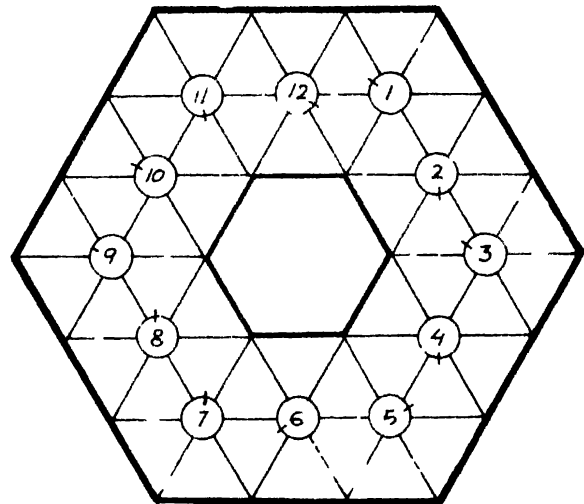
Start at the arrow, 2, and get to 1 in the centre, by moving vertically and horizontally and over the faces, and only from odd to even numbered squares, and vice versa. No diagonal moves allowed!

Word Power

A colourful display! But, to see the colours, you must remove one letter from each word and rearrange the letters to get the name of a colour. For example, remove W from WANT, rearrange ANT and you get TAN.

- 1 WANT
- 2 SCARLET
- 3 CHROMF
- 4 GROANED
- 5 DIRE
- 6 RANGY
- 7 BULGE
- 8 WITHER
- 9 VIOLATE
- 10 GENDER
- 11 GALLIC
- 12 SCORE

Word Play



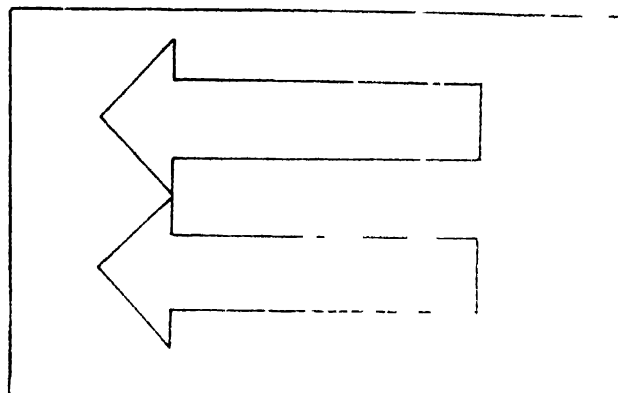
This word maze will contain 12 words when completed, one letter per space, reading in either clockwise or anticlockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below.

- 1 Four score
- 2 She gets in smothered with love
- 3 Disturbed, try ram
- 4 The computer number system
- 5 Not smaller
- 6 Ginger turns black
- 7 Decoration from horn at exhibition
- 8 It blazes through the skies
- 9 Has met around by London
- 10 A breed of dogs for tales
- 11 Revolve from a mingy rate
- 12 The day or the year before

Quizzbizz

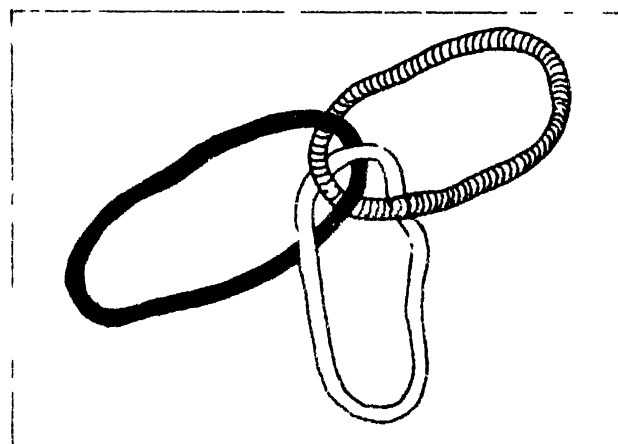
The smallest trees in the world, dwarf willows, in the Greenland's tundra, grow to a height of
a) 10 cm 2) 1 metre 3) 5 cm 4) 50 cm

Quick Think



Using only two straight lines make a third arrow

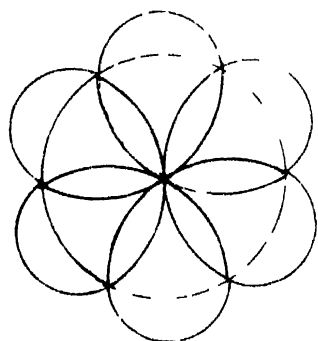
Mind Bender



The three magical rubber bands are very red in such a manner that you snap one and all the three fall apart

How would you tie an endless chain of loops so that if you open one all the loops fall apart?

Shape Sleuth



If the radius of the full circle of this decorative wrought iron window is 1 metre, what is the total length of wrought iron used in this window?

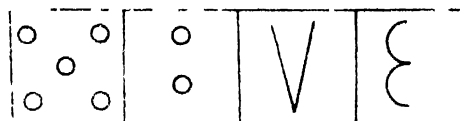
Wit Sharpener

The mileage for a new Maruti shows 959 km. 959 is a palindromic number, which reads the same backwards and forwards. When will be the next palindromic number on the metre?

The same could be said about a digital watch: the time is 9:59 when is the next palindromic time shown on the watch? What is the greatest amount of time that can elapse between palindromic times which can be displayed on a digital watch?

Solutions to last week's Teasers

Mindbender: Diagram A is formed by superimposing diagrams B and C.



Witsharpener: 271 eggs

Figure it Out:

8	÷	3	×	2
+	4	=	24	-
7	×	5	+	9

Shape Sleuth: 2C and 3A

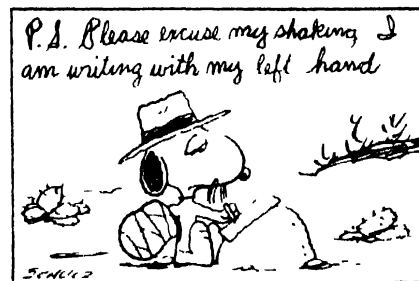
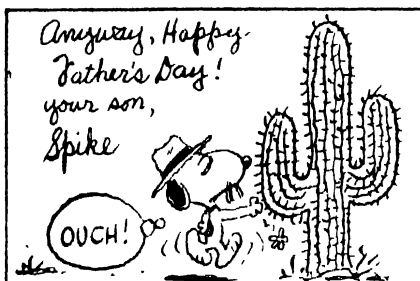
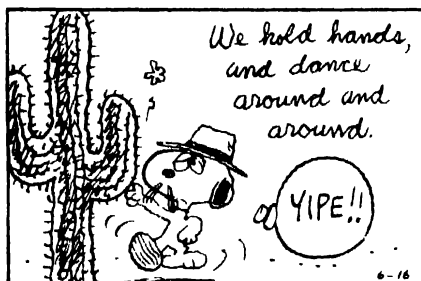
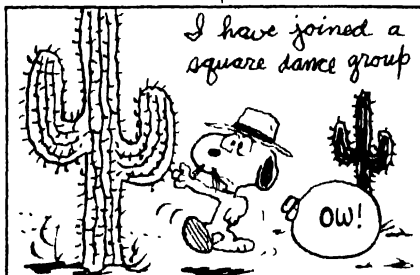
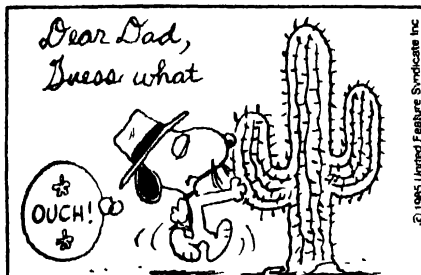
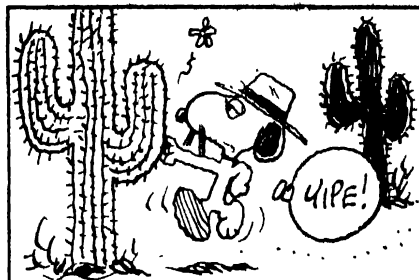
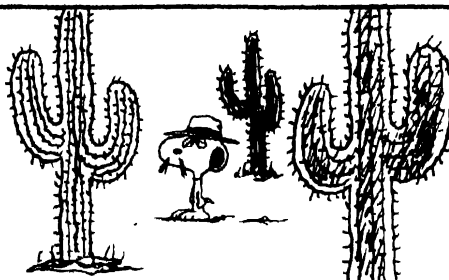
What's in a World: 1 incessant, 2 magnate, gateman, 3 sprite, priest, 4 rates, tares, aster, tears, 5 furred, draped, padres, spared.

Little Tussle: India, Tipperary, Denmark, Russia, Jerusalem, Verona, Gaza, Danube, Havana, Halifax, Reading, Wakefield, Brighton, Alice, Nile, Everest, Venice, Germany.



PEANUTS

featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ



SCIENCE

INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

Preventing Another Bhopal

Making chemicals will never be the same again. So said chemical industry leaders last December, when the escape of poisonous methyl isocyanate (MIC) from Union Carbide's plant in Bhopal killed more than 2,000 Indians and injured tens of thousands more. Yet six months later there is still no clear answer to the basic question: why did the accident happen?

One obstacle is litigation. During the prickly pre-trial negotiations about a possible settlement neither Union Carbide nor the Indian government has felt able to answer all questions freely. India has refused to accept \$5m from Union Carbide to help the victims, on the grounds that the company's requirements for information on the uses to which the money would be put were "onerous."

The most detailed version of what went wrong emerged in March, when Union Carbide's chemists finished analysing samples of the residue contained in a storage tank from which an estimated 50,000 lbs of MIC gas and liquid somehow escaped into the skies of Bhopal. They think that the

MIC stored in the tank had a higher than permitted quantity of chloroform mixed with it. When, for some reason, more than 100 gallons of water entered the tank, a reaction began between the MIC and the water, with the chloroform acting as a catalyst. This raised the temperature in the tank, corroded its stainless steel sides and dissolved iron—which also became a catalyst. The result was a violent reaction that raised the pressure in the tank so high that a safety valve burst.

Indian scientists agree that the introduction of water started the reaction inside the tank, but they think the amount was much smaller. Neither side has explained exactly how the water found a way in or why five crucial parts of plant's safety system were not operating.

Despite the uncertainties, the chemical industry is trying to reduce the chances of another Bhopal. In America, bills in Congress for stiffer regulations have prompted American manufacturers to:

- Try to reduce the risk of runaway reactions. A common tactic is to

reduce the amount of toxic material stored in chemical plants, sometimes by converting hazardous waste products into non-toxic chemicals. Union Carbide resumed the production of MIC last month at its plant at Institute, West Virginia, after investing some \$5m in new safety equipment. It includes a more powerful vent scrubber and a newly designed flare tower.

- Coordinate safety plans. Through a programme called "Chem-net," chemical companies have undertaken to deal with accidents involving chemicals being shipped through their areas by other companies. They are also cooperating in a programme to improve emergency evacuation plans. An independent centre for chemical plant safety is planned.

- Allay public anxieties. Monsanto and several other big chemical firms are beginning to tell people living near their plants about the chemicals they make there. The Chemical Manufacturers Association has set up a free telephone information service to answer questions about the risks of chemical products.

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Birds of a Feather

The defence minister, P V Narasimha Rao and the union home minister, S B Chavan, belong to the same political school. Both of them are from the erstwhile Hyderabad state, ruled by the Nizam, and they both began their political careers in the Hyderabad state Congress under the leadership of Swamy Ramanandathirth. After the reorganisation of states in 1956, when the Marathwada region was ceded to the Bombay state and ultimately became a part of Maharashtra, S B Chavan drifted into the politics of that state. And for P V Narasimha Rao who is a Brahmin, the struggle for survival in the Reddy and Kamma dominated Andhra Pradesh began. Narasimha Rao, after being a minister in the Brahmananda Reddy cabinet, became the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh and was inducted as a general secretary of the AICC in the Seventies.

Sundar Singh



S B Chavan

Chavan, starting off as a municipal chairman shifted to Bombay as a deputy minister under Y B Chavan. For over a decade he was the cabinet minister in charge of irrigation before becoming the chief minister. After the defeat of the Congress in 1977, S B Chavan left the company of Indira Gandhi and formed a regional party. (At the time of leaving the Congress in 1977 he had not settled the details of the election resources.) Later he joined

Kamal Sena



P V Narasimha Rao

the Sharad Pawar led PDF ministry and once again became the irrigation minister. Then he rejoined the party led by Indira Gandhi and now along with P V Narasimha Rao has emerged as a powerful central minister. According to the grapevine, the Swamy Ramanandathirth connection still binds Rao and Chavan together. The appointment of K. Prabhakar Rao, a protégé of Narasimha Rao, as the Maharashtra Governor is being attributed to this alliance.

Poor Show

Doordarshan's incompetence was writ large on television screens on 23 June. The coverage of the tragic air crash was amateurishly handled. At one point it was announced that the list of victims was available at Palam airport and the camera focussed on the hands of a man who flipped through a few sheets of paper which viewers assumed was the list. The list of names could easily have been announced and displayed on the screen. The death of 329 Air India passengers and crew did not deter Doordarshan from continuing with its scheduled amusement programmes. That apart, the programmes were not interrupted with news flashes as would have been appropriate for the occasion.

Passport Blues

Menaka Gandhi has returned from her foreign trip. But her close lieutenant Akbar Ahmed cannot go abroad. Reason: his passport expired in August 1984 and the regional passport office in Lucknow has not been able to issue a new passport for "Dumpy" Ahmed till now. The former legislator is involved in the Tikori Singh murder case (which took place at Gauriganj during Menaka Gandhi's maiden tour of her late husband's constituency). According to the passport office, till the police clears him of the charges, Ahmed cannot be issued a passport. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court was moved by Ahmed and the passport office has now been ordered by the court to either issue him a passport or provide reasons for its inability to do so. Ahmed, after losing the Lok Sabha elections, did not contest the Assembly polls.

D. E. Nizamuddin

Unlucky Seven?

Public notice number seven (of 1985), issued by the chief controller of imports and exports (CCIE) may prove to be unlucky for a large textile firm. This order, issued on 29 May, shifted purified terephthalic acid (PTA) from the open general licence list to the restricted list. Just two days before the notification, an actual user of the item had registered with the government contracts worth Rs. 30 crores with an irrevocable letter of credit valid for a year for the import of PTA. The order of 29 May puts a limit of 90 days on all such preban contracts. Interestingly, the day the order was issued after discussions between commerce minister V P Singh and petroleum minister Nawal Kishore Sharma

the CCIE office was virtually empty. One wonders if the public notice could have been duly processed by the classification committee. The post of CCIE was vacant, with the last incumbent, P C Jain having been shifted to the defence production department as secretary.

Additional CCIE Tripathi was holding charge. But on 29 May, the two concerned officers were not available in Delhi: the joint CCIE, Mehrotra had gone on a tour of Bombay while his deputy, G R Nair, was on annual leave. Not only this, the other concerned officer, director general of technical development (DGT), Dr. Lathe was abroad. According to whippers in Udyog Bhavan, the decision was rushed through to slight a major industrialist. But the decision is being reviewed.

Commando Culture

Strenghtening commandos seem to be competing with the neem trees of New Delhi. The British had lined all major roads of the capital with neem trees. This has now resulted in shady avenues. Most VIPs are now being guarded by commandos. Even on ordinary occasions, the police send commandos to control crowds. On 10 June, when the Yuva Janata organised a demonstration against the Festival of India in the lobby of the Taj Mahal hotel, some commandos were rushed to the spot. The wife of a neo-VIP is often seen in the evenings taking a stroll with her dog in the special security district of the capital. And a set of commandos can be seen keeping a watch

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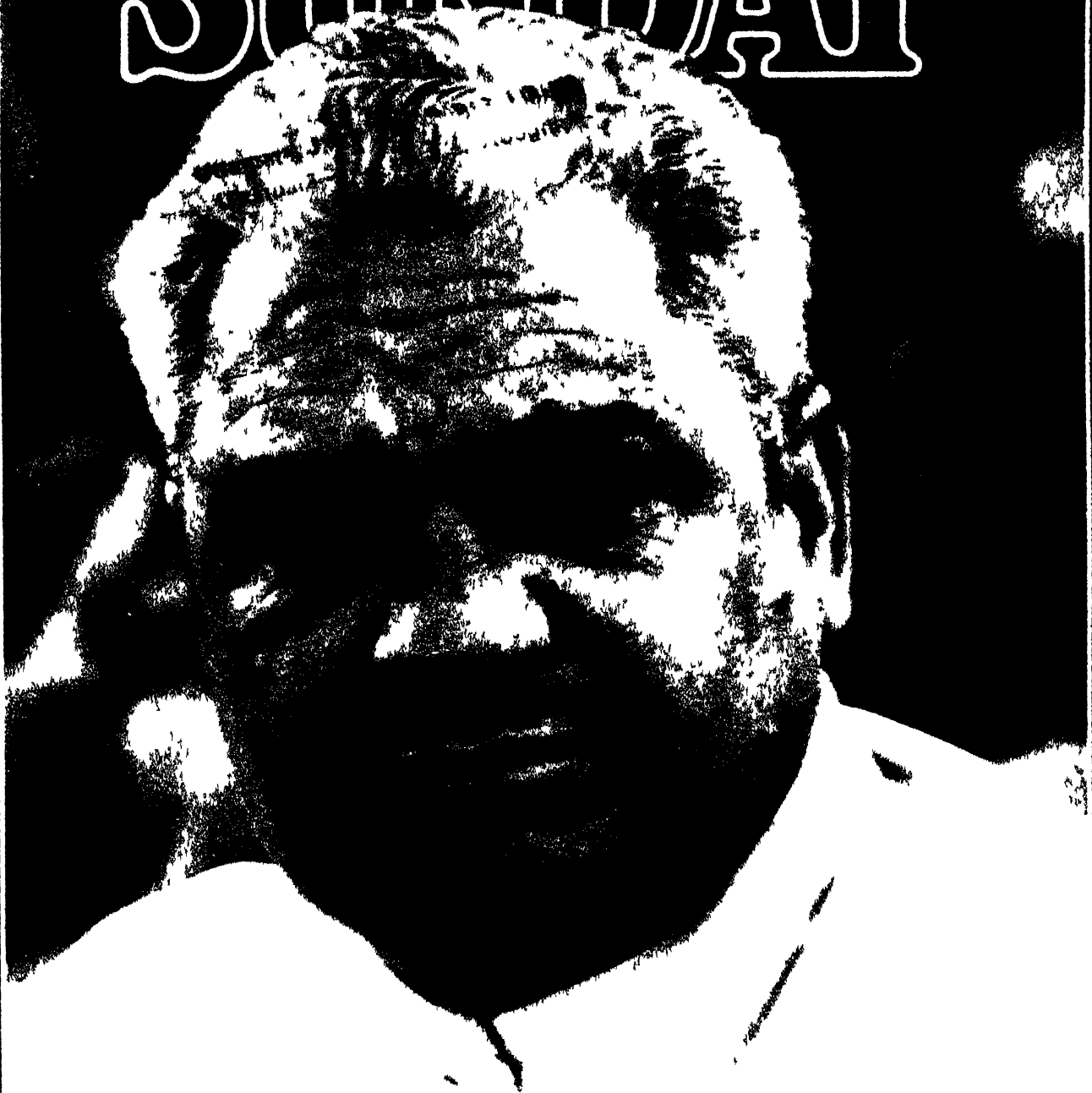


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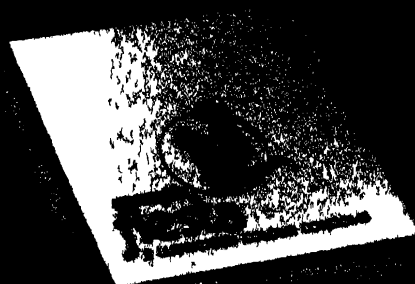


**HOW CORRUPT IS
BHAJAN LAL?**



KOHINOR

And no
two moments
will ever
be the same



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Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assertion that no more concessions would be granted to the Akalis unless they responded favourably and the Akali chief H.S. Longowal's threat that the jatha would not be withdrawn could lead to fresh tension in Punjab. A report

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'I Had to Give in (to the Government) but in the Interest of the Institution'

Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Y.V. Chandrachud tells Kuldip Nayyar



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Swami Vishnu Devananda popularly known as the 'Flying Swami' is minting money by running fake yoga institutions throughout the world. An investigation by Binoo John

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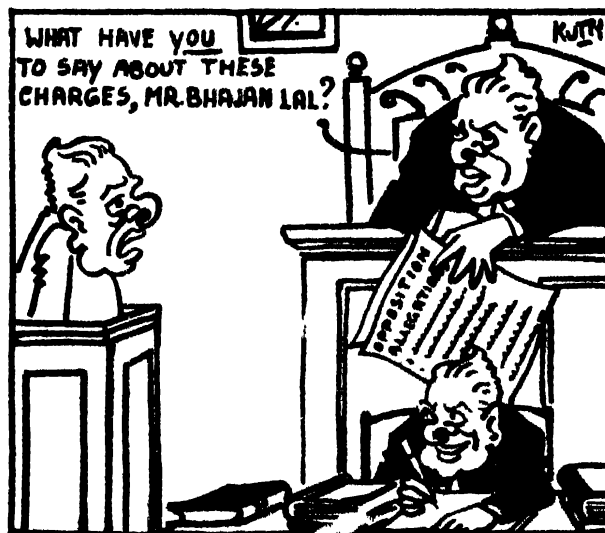
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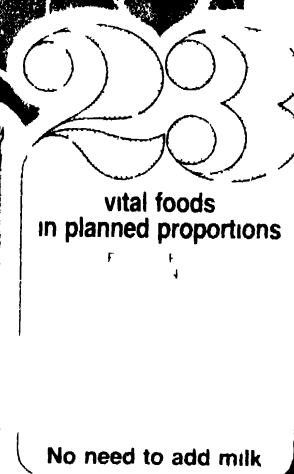


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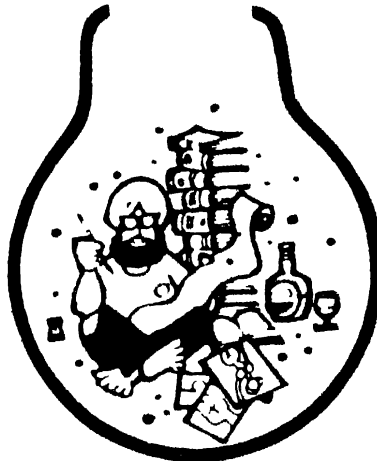
A Tale with a Moral

I write this story with malice aforethought for four reasons: it is true, it depicts the inability of our people to digest success, it tells of the common man's reaction to the arrogance of upstarts and it has a moral ending. I mention no names because I have had enough trouble facing *poseurs* and liars who hauled me before the Press Council and courts of law all over the country. The toolscaps I hoist in this piece will fit many fat heads.

Once upon a time a young man on the make hitched his wagon to the right re-emerging star. His fortunes rose as the bandwagon on which he found an empty seat rolled on past the winning post. He then added his dues. And for the moment found himself a Member of Parliament. He had arrived. India was his oyster. He should be *ad idosa* because he happened to be over 40 in the probability and went on remarkable metamorphosis. From being painted as always *pe-chuzooning* over on the world and only *lee-huzooned* people from whom he would get better position or money. If you had known him before he became an MP you would not have recognised him after he had become one.

One time when he had to call on one of my moved friends whether for a cup of coffee or something else, we will never know, Mr. Moneybags who had got used to being punched regularly like the fabulous *Kamadheni* had quite a security *bandobast* about his multi-storied office. Inevitably for our MP the chief security man at the entrance happened to be a Harvanni Jat. Those who know Harvanni Jats will agree that it is wise not to get into an argument with one of them for they can be tougher than Punjabi Jats. Our MP tried either did not know the stuff Harvanni Jats are made of or failed to recognise the fellow in uniform as one of the tribe.

To make a long story short the MP alighted from his newly air-conditioned car and proceeded to stride into the multi-storied building. The Harvanvi put out his hand to stop him and asked him to go to the reception desk to get a pass. He brushed the Harvanvi aside rudely and walked up to the elevator. The Harvanvi ran after him to try to stop him. The MP roared '*Too jaanti nahin main kaun hoon?*' (you do not know who I am?)" and hit him a back hander which knocked off the Harvanvi's cap. After half an hour with his Money bag and getting his



cup of coffee or whatever else he had come to see his *Kamadihenu* for, he went down the elevator expecting an apology and polite behaviour from the security man. The guard was waiting for him. By now he had even tried to know who the visitor was. It was in front of other colleagues and other visitors visiting in the reception in the plant's night lab in the MPS face which not only shocked off the MPS glass but sent him staggering on the floor. If you don't believe me, next time you run into a Hoxhaist, it provokes him to slap you on the face and you'll understand what I mean.

There are quite a few moral lessons to be learnt from this anecdote. First, nothing is harder to digest than success. It not only irritate the stomach, it can also turn your head. Second, no one is so arrogant as a man not even his wife or children. Last of all, *utraghar* (the pollard) who outnumber NIP ten million to one. And finally, when you run into a Huxvanti to be on the safe side, address him as you would address Chaudhary Chaitan Singh Chaudhary, the son of the village head.

Boring, Not Obscene

There was a time when any book dealing with deviant sex or which had four-letter words was automatically banned. The ban extended to reviews and interviews. I remember always a question about the ban in the pre-1960s by the censor. I remember a certain French publisher. Novels which were banned in England were published by the Obelisk Press in Paris. In my college days every time I went to France on vacation the first thing I did was to get hold of the latest Obelisk Press publications. After reading them I put them in new paper covers to

smoke them but to find out they
were not a part of the fish or
heron.

Of the many famous books I read,
the one that stayed in my mind was
Radcliffe Hall's Well of Loneliness.
It was my first introduction to the
phenomenon of lesbianism. At that
time I did not know that there were
homosexual passions which outlasted
infatuation with girls and boys and gave
them sexual fulfillment at all times. At
that time I did think it was very
curiously written. Because of the
court case about her, Radcliffe
Hall had become a figure. She
came from a well-to-do landed family
given to mainly sports like fox-
hunting. From being somewhat of a
tom boy she developed into a mascu-
line female rock on the name. I'm
wondering whether and perhaps to
attribute to her the story of 27
February 1908, "The Courtship
of Mabel Grey," published
in *The New York Times*, where
she told us how during her
adolescence her passion was for
a girl named Clara in Cambridge
who later died. Keith remained
John's close companion and wife.
This relationship did not prevent
John from having affairs with other
women who he considered as the
kind of thing that only married
men would do.

For all the West's fondness for a second opinion, it is not that kind of formula that has been gone but the author's attitude will remain. The book is not so burned at the stake as it once was, but its lack of respect for what is familiar is a definition of a barbarian sex apart from the tame sentence and that might be well not divided. Nevertheless when the book was first published in 1928 the British press came down on it with invective like truth and disgusting. For the first time it was a book that was not a type of with the Mother Superior. The manner would not raise a censorious eyebrow if the book

Our Three Selves: A Biography of Radclyffe Hall written by Michael Baker has been published recently. The three selves are Radclyffe (John) Hall, Michael Lady Batten and H. J. (John) Hall. The book is a biography of the three selves and their lives. It is a very interesting and well-written book. It is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the lives of these three people. It is a very good book and it is well worth the price. It is a very good book and it is well worth the price. It is a very good book and it is well worth the price.

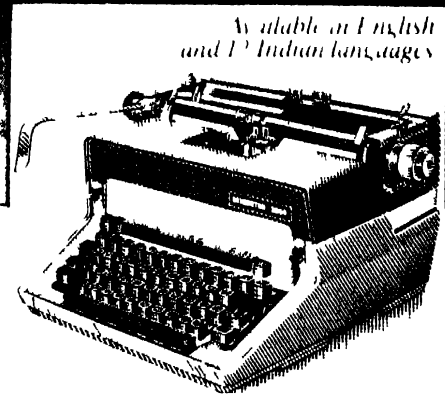
They look upon me for leaning all
away

Did the Hand turn out the Potter
 time

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How Well Does the Government Work?

Whether or not the five-day week will improve efficiency in government offices only time will tell. But the fact that the government now feels the need to improve standards of efficiency itself is welcome. This is not the first time that the government has admitted that its employees could be made to dispose off greater loads of work faster. But even after several remedies to inefficiency have been attempted, it persists.

One marked symptom that has drawn attention is the number of personnel in the government's employ. The home ministry has conducted an exercise to counter the argument that the government would be "better managed and result-oriented" if the size of the bureaucracy were reduced. It contends that it would be "too simplistic to say" that the bureaucracy can be trimmed; according to it, the "strength of the staff is regulated by work norms and other criteria depending on the functional needs of government."

Of course, it is too much to expect the government to find fault with itself. But the home ministry's exercise has come up with some interesting data. On an average, the number of central government employees has increased by 50 per cent every year. This means that their number has more than doubled since Independence. There has also been found to be "some relation" between the size of the staff and the government's total expenditure. A public sector unit was taken as an example. It was found that expansion of staff took place at the lower levels, though "accretions at lower levels slowly add to work at higher levels" and sometimes when the work-load increases, organisations have to be "bifurcated."

What has been conceded is that "sometimes there is a conscious effort at strengthening the organisations which may mean upgrading posts." But the ministry's explanation is that "the democratic process itself, maybe, is, to some extent, responsible for the faster expansion at the top. In the process, the pressure of work at higher level increases and expansion at those levels follows."

The main point of criticism against the bureaucracy is that it is top-heavy. A job that was done by one under-secretary in the past is now done by two deputy secretaries and a joint secretary. There are too many hands doing the same job and the result is slow, clumsy administration. On many occasions, a post is upgraded because there are no senior posts and somebody is due for a promotion—although he continues to do the

same work.

The ban on recruitment of personnel when exercised for reasons of economy, is usually imposed on the employment of lower grade clerks and peons. The system of 'noting' by different grades of officers at various levels of administration, has become an integral part of governance, perhaps to justify their presence. Many countries have done away with this system, but in India, it has spread vertically and horizontally, especially since Independence.

It is said that just after partition, the bureaucracy in Pakistan dealt with the work more swiftly and intelligently. This was surprising, but a study later revealed that the old files took some time to reach Karachi from New Delhi, and as there were no "precedents," the noting was simple and direct. In one of his letters, Jawaharlal Nehru had instructed the state chief ministers, that "there should be only one note in the file and that too by the officer who can take some action on it. Previous notings are just wasted, we should concentrate on the quality of our work."

When Paul H. Appleby, an eminent expert in public administration visited India in 1952, he pointed out that "too many forms of class, and rank" existed as did a high level of "prerogative consciousness" in the bureaucracy. Describing governmental procedures as "cumbersome, wasteful and dilatory" he stressed the need to pin responsibility. Nehru followed up Appleby's recommendations with a note to the home ministry: "We have worked too much in the rut and carried on old traditions which have little significance today. If we are to work for a welfare state, our administrative services have to function somewhat differently and indeed, have to think differently. I think that one of the major issues that we should face, and face soon, is a reorganisation of our administrative structure."

Induction of personnel from external sources could improve the functioning of the bureaucracy. Their fresh ideas would see the exit of outdated rules and procedures, and make way for more speedy disposal of work. At present, an import licence has to pass through numerous hands before it reaches the authorising officer. Therefore, it is not surprising that some business houses employ retired public servants to get their files cleared through the jungle of rules and regulations.

One can only hope that Rajiv Gandhi is not restricting himself to the stringent limits of "precedents" and will take positive steps to improve administrative procedures.

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Troubled State

The Mess in Gujarat (30 June—6 July) aptly sums up the situation prevailing in Gujarat. The state is undoubtedly in total chaos. The violence and arson in the wake of the anti reservation agitation are due to the callous handling of the situation by the Gujarat government. It is a pity that the land of Mahatma Gandhi is now in the grip of such severe communal violence.

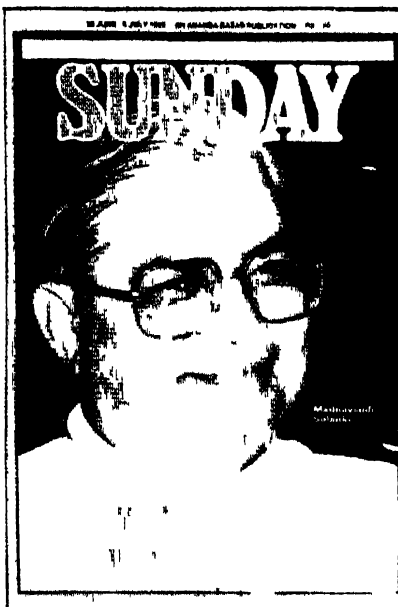
Rajiv Grewal, Calcutta

• I was relieved to learn that the Gujarat chief minister Madhavsingh Solanki has resigned. He had failed miserably to quell the large scale violence that has erupted in the state. It was high time Mr Solanki deemed it necessary to accept moral responsibility for the tragedy and submit his resignation.

Nirmal Jeet Singh Walia, Calcutta

• The objective portrayal of the state of affairs in Gujarat was commendable. It is tragic the way the anti reservation stir has taken on communal colours. If the centre has been able to control the riots following Mrs Gandhi's assassination, why is it unable to tackle the problem which has been plaguing Gujarat since January? Madhavsingh Solanki had no right to teach a lesson to the pressmen.

M Shams Reza, Jamshedpur



• It was unworthy of SUNDAY to feature a person like Madhavsingh Solanki on the cover story.

Tilok Upadhyay Konala, Dibrugarh

• Rajiv Gandhi, addressing the US national press conference, remarked that the Indian press was completely free. However ironically, the press in Gujarat was being gagged by Madhavsingh Solanki. Perhaps the PM was not aware of what was happening in the Congress(I) ruled state!

Ali Akbar Jheherally, Madras

Bureaucratic Flop

Wilfred Lazarus' comment in *The Taming of the Press* (30 June—6 July) that the Emergency was certainly not the answer to a chronic malady surprised me. The general manager of *Samachar* during the Emergency should have realised this before. It is a fact that the Emergency failed in its objective because the bureaucracy was not prepared to handle the powers bestowed on them.

G I D'Souza, Bangalore

• Journalists are by and large a conceited lot. Imagine them criticising the Emergency declared in 1975. The last to add in his bit was Wilfred Lazarus who thought that Indian politics has awakened and anyone tinkering with it would come to grief. None seems to realise that common man is not bothered about censorship or freedom of the press as long as any move does good for them. Imagine things being available aplenty and at reasonable rates, government offices and banks more responsive to the under privileged and state transports showing a semblance of orderliness and courtesy. The only black spot was forced sterilisation, which some overenthusiastic officials implemented. This voted Mrs Gandhi out of power.

P L Dhar, Calcutta

The Many Faces of the Emergency

The special issue on the Emergency (*Never Again*, 23—29 June) was worth preserving. I appreciated Uma Vasudev's outstanding analysis. The importance of civil liberties is realised only when they are denied. The Emergency, for the first time, made the common people aware of the pressing need for fundamental freedoms. The Emergency also organised the hitherto indifferent masses into a force to reckon with.

Ajoy Kumar Singh, Deoghar

• The Emergency was imposed by Indira Gandhi with the sole purpose of covering up her administrative failures and to keep her family in power. Though the Emergency is a constitutionally legitimate tool in the hands of a government, its misuse at all levels and the way it was imposed by Mrs Gandhi ignoring parliamentary procedures and misguiding the President, raises suspicion and weakens the argument in favour of its imposition. The contention of R K

Karanjia, the blind supporter and admirer of the Nehru dynasty, that Emergency in a limited scale should be imposed to help Rajiv Gandhi tackle the problems confronting the nation proves his irrational attitude. If Mr Gandhi is too young and inexperienced to solve the crises, an alternative may be tried out instead of thinking of yet another Emergency.

M H Rama, Bhubaneswar

• The cover illustration depicted the tombstone of the Emergency. But I wonder why RIP had not been inscribed on it. Is it because the government may interpret it as 'Return if Possible'?

Kumar Roy, Korba

• In those dark days I, one of the boarding schools of Mussoorie, I remember vividly how I was prevented from visiting the Mussoorie town as punishment for having criticised the ruling party in one of the monthly essay tests for the dastardly

acts being committed in the garb of the Emergency. However, in private, the staff members congratulated me for my courage and one of them presented me with a book with the inimitable words of Tom Paine embossed on it: "There are times that try a man's soul."

M Atiyab Siddiqui, Delhi

• The Emergency was clamped so that a few chosen people could rule. Had Indira Gandhi resigned immediately after the Allahabad Court judgment and ordered elections, she could have returned to power with a better mandate. But strangely, she behaved like a dictator and the people punished her for it.

R S Uppal, Lucknow

• It was unfortunate that vested interests took advantage of the Emergency. Moreover, Indira Gandhi made a serious mistake by censoring the press.

N Ellango, Tirunelveli

OPINION

• The special issue was packed with informative articles. Indira Gandhi ordered elections in 1977 not because she was a democrat or because the intelligence agencies told her that she would win. Elections were held in Pakistan and Mrs Gandhi had to prove to the world that she is a greater democrat than Bhutto.
Prabhat Goyal, Agra

• Chandra Shekhar rightly referred to Jayaprakash Narain as the *Misunderstood Messiah*. JP was a true Gandhian who did not care for name or fame. It is a tragedy that his message was misinterpreted by a large section of his followers.
B. Venkateswar Patra, Ambodala (Orissa)

• Please do not remind us of those dark days of the Emergency, it does not serve any purpose.
S.S. Raju, Bombay

• I agree with R.K. Karanjia that a mini-Emergency is necessary to solve the problems of the different states ('We are in need of a mini Emergency'). It is high time an Emergency is declared to crush communalism, secessionism and insurgency.
Subal Chandra Saha, Malda

• The special issue was unduly critical of the Emergency. I have lived through the Emergency and I saw the chaos that prevailed in the days prior to the proclamation. Why weren't people who supported the Emergency like S.S. Ray allowed to voice their opinion? SUNDAY published just one side of the story.
Shailaya Balkrishnan, Madras

• Justice J.C. Shah misrepresented the situation prior to the Emergency in his interview with Kuldip Nayar. While highlighting the circumstances leading to the imposition of the Emergency he maintained that neither was there any breakdown of law and order in the country nor was the economic condition deteriorating. This is not true. Indira Gandhi had imposed the Emergency not to save herself but to save the nation from the chaos and turmoil prevailing in the society at the time. In view of the growing population, I feel, that the family planning measures taken by Sanjay Gandhi and Rukhsana Sultana were justified.
Tilok Upadhyay Koirala, Dibrugarh

• While going through the cover story, I was amused by Kuldip Nayar's allegation that Mohammad Yunus had asked V.C. Shukla to arrest Mr Nayar during Emergency

Why does Mr Nayar level such a charge after ten years? I say so because Kuldip Nayar has been detailing his Emergency experiences in various newspapers, but nowhere has he mentioned this fact. I wish Mr Shukla finds time to tell the real story.

Sudhir Sharma, New Delhi

• There was nothing new in the cover story. I found it lengthy and boring. SUNDAY cannot afford to waste so much space for an outdated topic.
Faiz Ahmad, Murshidabad

• The arguments advanced by Khushwant Singh while defending the Emergency were unconvincing (*The Knight of the Emergency*). It is ironical that he supported all the Emergency measures except the press censorship. But no one believes that the Emergency was clamped to control the deteriorating law and order situation in the country as claimed by Mr Singh. How can one support such draconian measures in a democratic land?

M. Waheed Khan, Aligarh

• It was not clear why Khushwant Singh supported the Emergency. The renowned journalist's argument that he backed Sanjay's policies because the latter took some corrective measures like clearing slums and planting trees, sounded childish. I would have appreciated Sanjay's efforts had he made alternative accommodation arrangements for the poor slum-dwellers.

K. Ravichandran, Ahmedabad

• Khushwant Singh was self-contradictory when he supported the Emergency without the press censorship. The inconsistency in his stand was pointed out by Mrs Gandhi, whom he quotes: 'There can be no Emergency without censorship on the press.' If Sanjay Gandhi, whom he praised, was to rule today, all freedom-loving Indians including Mr Singh would have been behind the bars. Khushwant Singh should admit that he was wrong in supporting the Emergency.

M.A. Rane, Bombay

• It was surprising to note that while Khushwant Singh praised the Emergency whole-heartedly, Justice J.C. Shah found evil designs in its proclamation. Justice Shah rightly said that the Emergency was imposed to extend dynastic rule in India. The harrowing days of the Emergency were portrayed accurately by Kuldip Nayar and Janardhan Thakur.

Malay Kumar Nandi, Calcutta

• I was infuriated by Khushwant Singh's article on the Emergency where he lauds Sanjay Gandhi for being a 'doer.' Mr Singh displays an unpardonable arrogance and blindness in his attitude towards the people less fortunate than himself when he defends the *nasbandi* and slum-clearance programmes of Sanjay Gandhi.

Siddharth Dube, Calcutta

• Khushwant Singh's article surprised many like me for I thought that those who imposed the Emergency, later realised their mistake and were repentant. However, Khushwant Singh seemed to stick to his belief that the Emergency was a necessity. I can still recall the terror in the minds of the common people during those dark days. A lot of atrocities were perpetrated in the name of sterilisation. Khushwant Singh also praised Sanjay's efforts to plant trees in the capital. But why beautify Delhi only? What about the rest of the country?

S.C. Malakar, Agra

• Khushwant Singh was right in praising Sanjay Gandhi. Sanjay was undoubtedly a born politician. His family planning programme and slum clearance drive made him and Indira Gandhi unpopular but he did not bother. His slogans, "Each One, Teach One" and "One Family, One Tree" are relevant even today. Sanjay might have been a controversial person due to his style of functioning but he did many good things for the country. It is indeed a tragedy that he had to leave us so early.

V.N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

• There is nothing unconstitutional or undemocratic about the Emergency and Khushwant Singh rightly supported it. Jayaprakash Narain and his followers forced Indira Gandhi to declare the Emergency. When the Congress(I) government was voted out of power in 1977, it was not a vote against the Emergency; it was a vote against Emergency excesses. It would be thoroughly unfair to brand Indira Gandhi as a dictator simply because she imposed the Emergency to restore law and order.

Helen Albertes, Guwahati

• Sanjay Gandhi was more sinned against than sinning. Many people misunderstood him during his lifetime and the people who sided with him were also unduly criticised. However, those very people have realised their mistake and they admit that Sanjay did a lot for the nation.

Param Hans Singh, Arrah

A Message for All

The sound logic with which Rafiq Zakaria refuted the charge that the Koran preaches hostility towards followers of other faiths was commendable (*The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims*, 9—15 June). The author has not only countered the arguments of the mischief-mongers, but has also given an enlightening and scholarly interpretation of the holy book.

Zafre Alam Khan, Naseerpur (UP)

• Here is some more information from the Koran that may interest non-Muslims:

* There is no compulsion in religion. The Prophet was the messenger of God and his primary mission was to convey God's eternal message to mankind

* "Let not the believers (Muslims) revile the Gods... lest they revile their God too..."

* "Say unto the non-believers...to you your religion, and to me, mine."

The holy Koran is not only addressed to the Muslims, it contains a message for everyone.

M.Y. Sadiq, Bhubaneswar

• Dr Zakaria's article was informative. However, I do not understand how the author concludes that the idolators mentioned in the Koran do not refer to the Hindus.

G Rama, Calcutta

• The article is a desperate attempt to defend that which cannot be defended. "Slay the idolators, wherever you find them..." the author quotes the Koran and then tries to wriggle out of his folly.

P.N. Oak, New Delhi

• Dr Zakaria's statement that Ulemas accept the Hindus as believers in one God is ridiculous. By and large the Hindus are polytheists and idolators. The Indian Muslims look upon the Hindus as non-believers. That is why clashes between the two communities take place during religious festivals...I wish the learned author had urged the Muslims to liberalise Islam radically by ignoring the Koranic injunctions.

J. C. Nayak, Jeypore (Orissa)

• Dr Zakaria's reference to Krishna and Arjuna is out of context. Krishna told Arjuna not to hesitate to kill his nearest kith and kin for the cause of Dharma or righteousness. Dharma is not faith in God. Arjuna did not kill the Kauravas because they were non-believers but because they strayed from the path of Dharma.

Akkiraju Nataraj, Hyderabad

Well Analysed

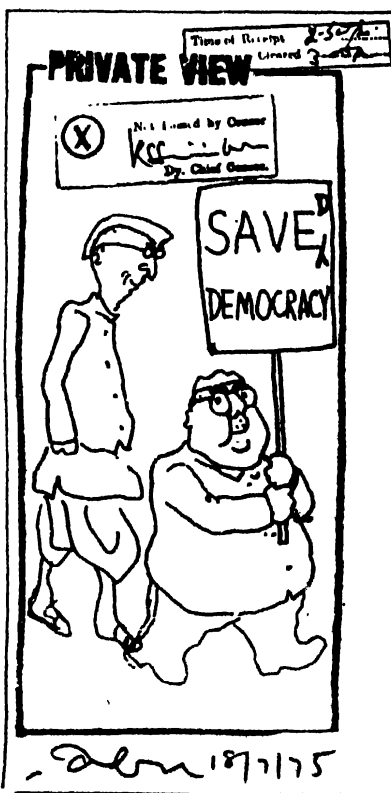
K.F. Rustamji should be lauded for his analysis of the ills plaguing Indian democracy in *The Pains of Progress* (16-22 June). He has advocated a 'mixture of organisational and governmental effort' for India. However, I feel, this theory can work only in the case of a non-communist government. The communist parties, especially the CPI(M), exploit this theory only to feed the party cadres with public funds.

Abhijit Kumar Sen, Hooghly (West Bengal)

• The article should serve as an eye-opener. After going through it, I doubt if we are prepared to enjoy the fruits of democracy.

P. Chalapathi Rao, Lunglei (Mizoram)

A Dig at the Censors



This refers to my cartoon published along with the article, *The Good, Bad and Ugly (Never Again)*, 23—29 June). The caption accompanying the cartoon wrongly mentioned that censors had added the alphabet 'D' after 'Save.' The insertion was mine as I wanted to have a dig at the censorship.

Abu Abraham, New Delhi

Understanding Nagas

I was disturbed to go through the special report, *The Border War* (23—29 June) by Seema Guha as it had a tinge of victor-vanquished attitude, painting one side as gruesomely opposed to the other. This, I feel, will influence readers who are not versed with the situation and will aggravate tension not only in the particular area but amongst communities as well.

The Merapani incident on 4 June should not be magnified beyond proportions as it is only a part of a long-standing issue. Let us have a look at the incidents happening in the area since 1977. A sub-divisional magistrate was manhandled in 1977 leading to the loss of two lives in peaceful protests. Moreover the Assam police have time and again set up posts inside Nagaland, regardless of standing agreements. Naturally, untoward incidents can flare up at the slightest provocation. Such sensitive issues must be shown in a proper historical perspective so as to project the correct nature of the problem.

In this context I would like to cite a few historical points. The British were attracted to this rich, fertile land as it was fit for colonial economy to flourish. In the process, the inhabitants of the hills were uprooted but the plainsmen thrived. A wedge of misunderstanding was driven between them.

In the post-Independence period, Nagaland witnessed a prolonged state of war. The Nagas were divided into four states following the British administrative divisions. Today, the Nagas have expressed their desire to regroup themselves under one administration. The intensity of their desire is great and must be understood in the correct perspective. Even the Congress(I) government in Nagaland has supported this claim but those in authority continue to ignore the sentiments of the Nagas. Pointing accusing fingers or guns at each other will not help. It is a tragedy that most of the national press look upon the Nagas as hostile people. But they should realise that the Nagas are hurt by such biased reports.

A.S. Angami, Kohima

Forged

This is to clarify that the letter credited to me under the heading, *Wrong, Mr Paul* (26 May—1 June) has been forged by mischievous parties to malign me.

I.J. Khosla, Calcutta

Winning Over the Superpowers

SUNDAY did a magnificent job by analysing Indo-US relations on the eve of Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Washington (*Is the West Buying Won?* 28 June). Indo-US relations with America have never been so good. However, after 1980, India began to show interest in the west, not because of the self-sufficiency that it has achieved over the years, but that she can now bargain with both the superpowers.

Rajesh Sahay, Hyderabad

• HUKU BHANU AGARWAL, former ambassador to India, clearly indicated his country's position towards a relation with India when he said in his interview with M. L. Akbar, *The Soviet Union probably did not want to import technology from the west* (*The New York Times*, 28 June). The very fact that the Soviet Union has ties with the USSR and not with an unhealthy India, is a clear indication

order to live up to its non-aligned status. Rajiv Gandhi should not concentrate on improving relations with only the superpowers; he should devote his energy to foster world peace. *N. L. Chandra, Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu)*

• I was dissatisfied with an ambassador's reply to M. L. Akbar's question: "There cannot be any deal with the United States if there are problems with the USSR." The US would like to see Pakistan merge with India, but there must be an element of truth in the slogan "Forward to the East" if the policy of the United States to help drive the tension in the subcontinent. Moreover, America is bent upon preventing India from playing her role in the leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement. It is a pity that HUKU BHANU AGARWAL missed the allegorical and absolute nonsense and absurd assumptions. *Rajesh Sahay, Ranchi*

Tavely Gossip

Khushwant Singh's book *Some 500 Years Ago* is a collection of short stories. But the letter to the editor in *The Times* (28 June) by M. L. Akbar has hurt the feelings of the community who read it. It would be better if the author had people in the community who read it for their own sake. *Shyamala H. Bhatnagar*

• In his column, Khushwant Singh has commented that I do not know of any Indian poet who has compared the women's eyes to oceans or lakes. Sweet and Sour (22-29 June). However, Hem Barua, the publisher of the *Nehru*, who was born in Assam, wrote in his book *poems* *Tomu sokut dehlis sagor tes mus nira* (I see a spiritual of the blue of the sea in your eyes). *A. Barua, Calcutta (AS)*

• Khushwant Singh is wrong when he says that Indian poets have never used oceans or lakes as similes for women's eyes. An Urdu couplet by Ehsas Gondwari reads: *Savun ka shor, jheel ka thabirao zor-e-mauj kya kya na teri ankhi ki ghiri uyon mein hai* (The turbulence of the sea, the calmness of the lake and the playfulness of the waves are all hidden in the depths of your eyes). *Faiz Ahmed Shola, Murshidabad (WB)*

Other Stalwarts

This is the first time that I have seen a book which has been published as the father of the management accountancy in India (*Sportstar*, 9-15 June). I have only recently paid for N. K. P. I have not seen the father of the profession, but I am the father of a professional accountancy in India. I have read the book and I am sure that the profession is by now well known. *S. N. Shrivastava, P. N. Saxena, and J. N. Bose, The vice-chancellor, members of the Institute of Cost Works Accountants of India, K. S. Venkatesh, Mysore*

Quite Indian

The manner in which Farooq Abdullah was dismissed has hurt the Kashmiris (*A Disaster Called G. M. Shah*, 16-22 June). The G. M. Shah ministry should be forced to quit since he is very unpopular and Dr. Abdullah reinstated. He is definitely an Indian to the core and cannot be dubbed as a pro-Pakistani. *K. V. Rajagopalan, Madras*

• The people of Kashmir have become leaderless after the death of Sheikh Abdullah. I can find no sane reason as to why Farooq Abdullah should make such statements like, "The bridge connecting the state with the rest of the country might collapse." *Subal Chandra Saha, Malda*

Unity in Peril

Readers between the lines of the cover story *The Summer of Discontent* (16-22 June) can conclude that certain politically motivated elements are trying to destabilise the country. It is necessary that the common man must realise this threat. Also, the government should desist from using the army to control the situation in a state of emergency. Another minor factor for the discontent in Punjab is the erosion of powers of the chief minister, who are gradually being made the prerogatives of the high command in Delhi. *Prabhat Mishra, Cuttack*

The Video Threat

I found the cover photograph of *Is Video Killing Cinema?* (9-15 June) very attractive. The sorry plight of the film industry reeling under the domination of video is beautifully depicted. I hope that only solutions in making low budget films for the video while money should be pumped into the film industry. *A. K. Bhatnagar, Kalimpong*

• The cover story was drab and dull. Is *Sun* trying to compete with glossy film magazines? *Reetan Chatterjee, Tezpur*

Solution in Sight

I have been reading with interest the book *Punjab On the Verge of a Revolution* (17 June) that the Punjab is on the verge of a revolution. It is a pity that it was not published by the government. It is a pity that the Punjab is on the verge of a revolution. *P. N. Aggarwal, Cuttack*

• The police report did not convey anything new. Irresponsible statements made by some politically motivated people were unnecessarily quoted in the article. *Narendra Kumar, Nasik*

• The Sikh terrorists provoked the government to send the army into the Golden Temple. If they had not slaughtered millions of innocent people in Punjab, there would have been no need for the centre to resort to Operation Bluestar. Now, it is the duty of the Sikh community to ensure that the Golden Temple does not become a refuge for terrorists. *Premal Yadav, Bombay*

HOW CORRUPT IS BHAJAN LAL?

As a man who has defied electoral arithmetic to form a government of his choice and has perfected the purchase-sale and kidnapping of MLAs to a fine art—Haryana CM Bhajan Lal is a phenomenon in Indian politics. In a memorandum submitted to Rajiv Gandhi, opposition leaders have accused him of (among other things) defrauding the state exchequer to amass wealth. Sankarshan Thakur investigates the charges.



Bhajan Lal: nothing is impossible

Is there any count of the number of allegations levelled against Haryana's reckless chief minister Bhajan Lal in this eventful life? Over the last 30 years, almost every conceivable vice has come his way: be it rape, robbery, thievery, smuggling, bribery, abuse of position, misuse of funds or nepotism. Bhajan Lal has grown up facing charges, and he has tried to deflect them. Allegations are piled upon him, but he does not bother without bothering him the slightest bit. United Bhajan Lal is contented he must be given a free nothing he has feared him. Nothing has hurt him. What is more, nothing and nobody has to date been able to keep him from the seat of power in Haryana, not all the machinations of the shrewdest of politicians in New Delhi, not even the people's mandate. He has outmanoeuvred the scheming Bansi Lal and Devi Lal and has managed to keep the Congress bosses in the centre happy, but when the need arises, he holds them to ransom. He would ever throw the people's will into a dustbin if it ran contrary to his own.

Haryana ever since Bhajan Lal came to power by toppling his then Janata Party colleague Devi Lal in 1979. It is gone the way he has willed. Perhaps he had the right formula with him and all the necessary talents to implement it. Everything has a price, every man can be bought and Bhajan Lal knew how to clinch the deals best. Time and again with frustrating ease he has displayed his penchant for clinging to power. A horse trader *par excellence*, a man who has proved that no government can function in Haryana without him at its top. That by no means indicates Bhajan Lal's popularity or the virtuosity of his administration. Make no mistake while Bhajan Lal has outdone his predecessors when it comes to infamy, he is nowhere near matching the thrust that Pratap

Singh Kairon (chief minister of the undivided Punjab) or Bansi Lal could give to Haryana. His forte is to twist the law to serve his own ends. He has used this fine art of his—honed and chiselled for 30 years—not only as an instrument of his political survival but also, they say, for personal gain. Ask anyone in Haryana and he would tell you long tales about Bhajan Lal, about how this poor villager who sold women's undergarments not too many years ago, became a living legend in Haryana. If even half the number of charges levelled against him are true, he has turned the state into his personal fiefdom.

Perhaps the most concerted effort against his lordly reign was launched on 4 July when 31 opposition MLAs from Haryana and 25 MPs, among whom were Chaudhary Charan Singh, Jagjivan Ram, Madhu Dandavate and Lal Krishna Advani, met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi with a memorandum, calling for a judicial probe into what they called the "money-minting industry that Bhajan Lal has converted Haryana into." The 42-page memorandum was forwarded with a letter to Rajiv Gandhi in which the opposition leaders warned him that his "claim to root out corruption from public life will be suspect if the memorandum does not lead to the setting up of an enquiry commission under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, 1952, against Bhajan Lal" and went on to state that the opposition leaders themselves were convinced about the "correctness and authenticity" of the acts of omission and commission committed by the Haryana chief minister for "securing monetary gains to himself and his relations." The memorandum itself was divided into two parts—one devoted solely to the "hows" and "whys" of the industrial empire built by Anoop Kumar Bishnoi, Bhajan Lal's son-in-law, in Hissar, and the other about the way Bhajan Lal himself had gone on a land-grabbing spree in the state. Both damn him as a man who has made the most of his position for enhancing his material worth. Power, this memorandum means, in effect, is not the only thing for which Bhajan Lal hungers; the man has a voracious appetite for wealth too. And he has had his share. "The charges made against him," says the letter to the Prime Minister, "relate to defrauding the state exchequer and making a mockery of all rules, regulations and norms which govern the functioning of the state apparatus with the sole purpose of accumulating ill-gotten wealth for him (Bhajan Lal) and the members of his family or his near



Bhajan Lal seeing off Mrs Gandhi at Palam airport: the way to stay

relatives."

This is not the first time that Bhajan Lal has been charge-sheeted—something that itself indicates what a free hand the Haryana chief minister has had. The same charges had been levelled by Professor Sampat Singh, a Haryana Lok Dal MLA, in a letter to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi just before the Assembly elections earlier this year. It went unheeded. But then, in his hurry to bring up the matter before the polls, Sampat Singh had not been able to submit a comprehensive complaint. What now covers more than 40 typed pages was handed in to the Prime Minister on a single sheet of paper.

The present memorandum is much more complete, much more impressive. It took more than four months of consistent labour to produce but at the end of it its authors were convinced they had taken the first worthwhile step against Bhajan Lal. The memorandum quotes profusely from government files and police records, gives insights into the *modus operandi* of Bhajan Lal and his henchmen, and provides more details of the industrial expansion of

the Bishnois in Hissar. In short, it has built a much stronger case against Bhajan Lal than ever before. Three men—all from the Lok Dal—seem to have done the major work on it. Haryana MLA, Prof. Sampat Singh, a man from Hissar, collected all the details of the operations of Bhajan Lal and the Bishnois in the town. Devi Lal, the former Haryana chief minister, used his old contacts in the bureaucracy to glean vital information, and Sushil Mohanta, a Rajya Sabha member from Haryana and a lawyer who is known in Lok Dal circles as the "Rajni Patel of Devi Lal" put it all together and prepared the brief. Its release, for the first time, drew an assurance of sorts from the centre and brought a slightly rattled Bhajan Lal scampering to New Delhi.

Roshni Devi, Bhajan Lal's daughter, was engaged to Anoop Kumar Bishnoi of Hissar early in 1981. A few months later, on 10 July they were married. 'Open Sesame' for the Bishnois! The family which through successive losses in business was almost on the roads



with its business a little out of control and most of its land mortgaged suddenly began to come to success. In the ensuing four years it became one of the top industrial houses of Haryana. By then, established in the period no less than 25 companies in Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. The Bishnois' first new venture, Bhanu Industries Private Limited, was registered in June 1981, almost immediately after the engagement of Roshni Devi with Anoop Bishnoi. The rapidity with which the group has diversified since then is breathtaking. Bhanu Steel, Bhanu Rolling Mills, Bhanu Metals

Bhanu Tools, Bhanu Ispat, Bhanu Forgings, Bhanu Iron and Steel, Haryana Industries, Haryana Ispat, Haryana Strips, Haryana Extrusion, Haryana Vinaspati: the list goes on. Most of these are concentrated on a single plot of land measuring 92 *kans* in the village of Satrod Kalan, ten kms from Hissar on the Delhi-Hissar highway. This plot is one of the keys to the Bishnoi success story.

It was purchased by the Bishnois on 27 May 1981 for Rs 5,63,000. On 19 September the same year, Bhanu Industries Private Limited mortgaged the entire plot to the Haryana Finance Corporation (HFC) in return

for a loan of Rs 30 lakhs, despite the protestations of a senior manager of the HFC who held that the loan should not be granted because the company in question had not completed the formalities that were necessary. This gentleman was suspended, another brought in his place and the loan was cleared. A little later, the HFC granted another loan of Rs 30 lakhs to Anoop Bishnoi, this time for his new company, Bhanu Steels Private Limited. Interestingly, the loan was given against the mortgaging of 32 *kanals* of land on the same plot which had been mortgaged earlier. How could mortgaged land be mortgaged again? But that was not the end of it. Twice more—once for Haryana Strips and another time for Haryana Industries Private Limited—Bishnoi mortgaged part of the same 92 *kanals* of land to receive loans worth Rs 60 lakhs. In none of these cases did officials of the HFC try to verify or even ask for the relevant records regarding the land. No site inspections which are usual in such cases were undertaken. Actively colluding in these deals, allege opposition leaders of Haryana, was J.K. Duggal, the managing director of HFC. But when contacted by *SUNDAY* at his Chandigarh office, the ageing, bespectacled IAS officer refused to comment, saying that he would have to take the permission of the chief minister before speaking to the press.

According to allegations made in the memorandum, other financial institutions and nationalised banks too have favoured Bhanu Industries with large sums of money without assuring themselves of proper securities. The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) is alleged to have granted loans to the tune of Rs three crores to Bhanu Industries. This loan was sanctioned on the recommendation of the Haryana government but the charge is that J.K. Datta, deputy manager of the IDBI, has been allotted a plot of land in Panchkula near Chandigarh from the discretionary quota of the chief minister 'as if in lieu of the help rendered in the grant of this loan'.

In nationalised banks, unions and stray officials have protested against the way loans were being given out to the Bishnois for various projects. But in the face of 'pressure from the top' resistance has crumbled. What when high officials of the banks themselves settle for their shares—a plot or two from the discretionary quota of the chief minister, a quick promotion. Bhanu Lal, in his own words, has built up a credibility for keeping his promises, people are more ready

Will an Enquiry be Held?

Bhajan Lal is being probed, though only informally. Immediately after the Prime Minister said in his 7 July press conference that he would look into the charges against the Haryana chief minister and order an enquiry if he thought there was a case against him, Bhajan Lal had come rushing to New Delhi to meet the Prime Minister. He met Rajiv Gandhi and left for Chandigarh that day, feeling confident and reassured by the centre. The next day, however, Bhajan Lal was back in the capital, summoned by the centre. The Haryana chief minister was camping in New Delhi's Haryana Bhawan for several days after that, perhaps wanting to be as close to events in New Delhi as was possible. The personnel department was busy all of the second week of July going through the memorandum presented by the opposition leaders. The procedure being followed in this case is that once the personnel department has gone into the charges against the Haryana chief minister the memorandum will be presented to Bhajan Lal himself for his comments. The memorandum will be reread along with the observations of Bhajan Lal on the chargesheet by the personnel department and then the matter will be referred to the Prime Minister for his decision. And even though the first step towards the enquiry has been taken, opposition circles are skeptical about whether the enquiry will really be held. "How can the Prime Minister depend upon the comments of a man," asked a leading Lok Dal member, "who himself has been chargesheeted? Is that the correct procedure?" Bhajan Lal has, even before he was asked to comment on

the charges, already come to his defence saying that the memorandum is "politically motivated." He told the Prime Minister and the home minister in his meetings with them that a "frustrated opposition" in Haryana was making desperate attempts to destabilise the Congress(I) government and that the centre should pay no heed to the allegations. Bhajan Lal's deputies, who have followed their leader to New Delhi give another reason why the charges should be dismissed. These, they say, are "very old" and have been raised time and again. When raised for the first time in the Haryana Assembly, Bhajan Lal himself had dared the opposition to conduct an enquiry and prove the charges against him. "I shall resign if you prove them," he had said. The opposition, however, had then refused to conduct an enquiry on its own because nobody in the government was ready to help them with the files and other records. And now that the opposition has got hold of all the records, Bhajan Lal has dropped his challenging attitude.

The first enquiry under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, 1952 was ordered on 1 November 1963 with the government of India appointing a commission headed by Justice S.R. Das, a former Chief Justice of India, to enquire into charges against Pratap Singh Kairon the chief minister of undivided Punjab state out of which Haryana was carved out later. This enquiry was held on a memorandum submitted on 13 July 1963 by Master Tara Singh and 20 others but its appointment was preceded by wranglings similar to the one going on now in New Delhi. The charges too were

similar—people had raised questions about the sudden economic advancement of the Kairon family after his having become the chief minister of Punjab. But the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, initially tried to dismiss them as "fantastic, frivolous and absurd." "There was no evidence at all," he said, "not the faintest, slightest shadow of it." But the Master Tara Singh memorandum came pressing down when the Supreme Court upheld an appeal against Kairon saying that the same orders given by him were vitiated by *mala fides*. Earlier, the Congress high command had itself made a cursory enquiry into the charges against Kairon and exonerated him. One of Kairon's pleas had been that his sons had misused his position without his knowledge.

Bhajan Lal, feel political observers in New Delhi, could take the same plea: his relatives misused his position and he would see to it that this does not happen in future. But what might be worrying him is the extraordinary interest the Prime Minister is taking in the matter. When he learnt that the opposition leaders were going to present a memorandum to him, he had asked the Haryana Lok Dal MLA, Sampat Singh, to give him a copy of the memo in advance so that he could go through the charges. Again, the Prime Minister spoke about the possibility of an enquiry at his press conference and followed it up setting into motion a preliminary investigation that involves the intelligence bureau. Yet, all this has not convinced political observers that the guillotine is really being prepared for Bhajan Lal.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

to deal with that kind of man.

For the Bishnois, anything could be done. Land belonging to the family could be exempted from takeover by the cantonment (Hissar is a strategically placed cantonment) through a special notification of the Haryana government, loans and other benefits could be arranged for distilleries owned by the family against all policies laid down by the government of India. Even a separate power station could be installed in the premises of the Bhanu Industries Private Limited just to make things easier for the Bishnois. There was nothing Bhajan Lal was not ready to do for his dear

daughter, Roshni and her family. In Haryana, a state perennially bogged by a power famine, the Bishnois have uninterrupted supply not only at the plant on the Delhi-Hissar road but also at their bungalow in Hissar's Model Town—they are connected to the "VIP lines." What is more, the Haryana State Electricity Board has set up its 33 KV power station inside the Bhanu Industries Private Limited itself. Security guards standing at the entrance refuse to talk about the whereabouts of Anoop Bishnoi or his father, Bhupendra Kumar Bishnoi. "Saab nahin hain ji" (Saheb is not in). At their residence the security

guards had told us that they were in the factory. At the factory they said they did not know where their masters were.

Do the Bishnois have foreign links that they want to hide? Some time ago they got an import licence for a five-tonne furnace from Radyne Ltd of Buckingham in England. According to the bill for the transaction (No. RMS/X/CH-21 dated 3.1.1984) the price of the furnace was put at Rs 6,20,303 and 40 paise only. The going market rate for a furnace of five-tonne capacity is much more. Even an Indian company sells a five-tonne furnace for no less than 65,00,000

A Tonic for Troubles

"Main sab ka ilaj kar doonga," said Bhajan Lal over the intercom from his suite in the Haryana Bhawan. He was not talking to the press, not giving any statements, not even ready to pose for a few pictures. The most he agreed to was a conversation on the intercom during which, provoked, he did come out with answers to a few queries. He sounded angry and irritated which is not his wont. "I shall see to all these people who have levelled charges against me," he said, "let my turn come. Then I shall talk to the press also. Give me some time and I shall certainly show them." But when asked about his meeting with the Prime Minister and the home minister, Bhajan Lal suddenly went on the defensive and said, "Yes I met them and nothing happened. Why are you asking this question now?" And then came the vow he had taken even in front of the Prime Minister and the union home minister, S.B. Chavan. "The opposition in the state is so frustrated. I have been so successful that they see no chance for themselves in the future so they have to do something to defame me. These are old tricks...they want to remove a chief minister who has been such an able administrator."

The memorandum of the opposition leaders had certainly sent Bha-



Bhajan Lal being cheered by supporters in New Delhi: yesmen galore

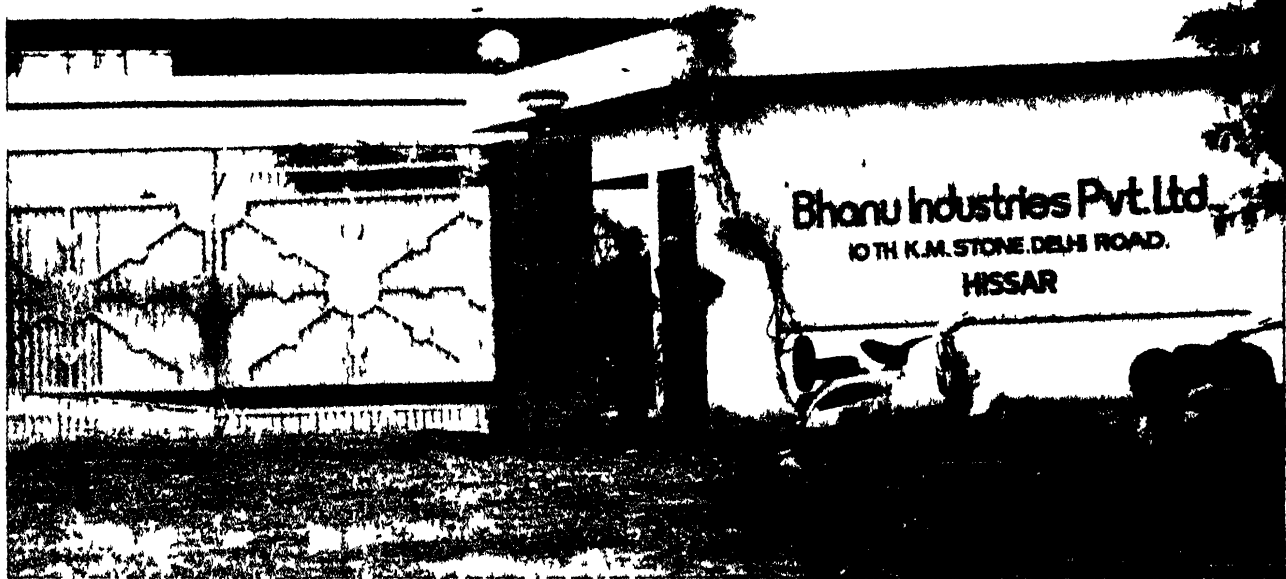
jan Lal into a panic. After the meeting with the Prime Minister a couple of days after his press conference on 7 July, Bhajan Lal had been camping in Delhi with half his government functioning from the Haryana Bhawan. His aim—to watch developments at the centre as closely as possible and try and win over the top brass of the party. Not that things had already been decided against him. But Bhajan

Lal is taking no chances. And, in what is characteristic of the man, he has launched a counter offensive against the opposition leaders who have taken the lead in the anti-Bhajan campaign. A day after he met the union home minister, Bhajan Lal summoned Dharma Pal Malik, a Congress(I) Member of Parliament from Sonapat and asked him to collect "all the evidence against Chaudhary Charan Singh, Devi Lal and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna." He intends to compile this evidence and present a counter-memorandum to the Prime Minister about them. Bhajan Lal's men have already begun talking about how Devi Lal collected Rs 77 lakhs on the 77th birthday of Charan Singh and then gave him only Rs 53 lakhs. And about Bahuguna and Charan Singh? "Arre, they have been in the government before, will it be difficult to take the skeletons out from their cupboards?" remarked one of Bhajan Lal's men in Haryana Bhawan. And in Chandigarh, some organisations backed by the Haryana chief minister like the Haryana Vikas Manch, have already launched a campaign which says the presentation of the memorandum against Bhajan Lal is part of an "Akali plot" to destabilise the region. So Bhajan Lal's promised "ilaj" is already being administered.



Charan Singh and H.N. Bahuguna: the men who opposed Bhajan Lal

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi



The entrance to the industry set-up by Bhajan Lal's son-in-law in Hissar

rupees. How did the Bishnois get a British turbine for ten times less than price? Questions remain unanswered. Was this underinvoicing done to evade duties or to hide the source from which the huge foreign exchange was arranged? The memorandum raises pertinent questions and suggests that "a thorough probe is bound to bring to light various links of the Bishnois who may be helping them in manipulation of foreign exchange or to launder the black money operations of chief minister Bhajan Lal." In the year 1984-85 chief minister Bhajan Lal's telephone bill had come to a staggering Rs 2,94,831 and included in his call list were several conversations with people abroad. These calls, allege opposition leaders, created a suspicion that the telephone has been used for furthering the business interests of the Bishnois and not for official purposes concerning the state.

And if the Bishnoi family has prospered by leaps and bounds in recent years, Bhajan Lal himself has not fared too badly. His main attention has been focussed on land and if one is to just glance through the documentary evidence that the opposition has collected from various government records, Bhajan Lal and his ilk have been gobbling up land in the state with the same speed that

has marked the expansion of the Bhanu industries in Hissar. In the beginning came the discretionary quota grants, Bhajan Lal distributed land to his near and dear ones like a bountiful lord. Among those who received it were Bhajan Lal's wife, Jasma Devi, his daughter, Roshni, Roshni's mother in law Vibha Devi, Bhajan Lal's cousin Hanuman, nephew Dwarka, brother in law Surja, Bhajan Lal's erstwhile business partner and 'dharmabhai,' Pokar Mal, Pokar Mal's son in law and to



Lok Dal MLA Sampat Singh

top it all, Bhajan Lal gave himself a plot of land in Faridabad. And one can only marvel at the way the chief minister tried to shield himself against expected allegations of indiscriminate allotment. In order that nobody could raise his finger against him, Bhajan Lal then proceeded to allot land from his discretionary quota to ministers in his cabinet, 11 judges of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and a string of VIPs and their relatives. Among the favoured were Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, the former chief minister of Haryana, Lok Dal chief Chaudhary Charan Singh, Deepa Tapase, daughter of the then Haryana Governor, G D Tapase and Gurdip Kaur, daughter of President Giani Zail Singh. If Bhajan Lal was in trouble, these names could come in handy.

But what, pray, would happen to fresh allegations that Bhajan Lal and his family have, in different parts of Haryana, devoured land worth crores of rupees? The memorandum of the opposition leaders quotes no less than five "land scandals" in which the chief minister is alleged to have grabbed land arbitrarily in the name of his relatives—all the transactions, as the memorandum itself suggests, are "benami" but records that have been obtained show that in all these cases, the beneficiaries are close relatives of the Haryana chief minister,

From Ticketless Traveller to CM

Adampur Mandi is a prosperous village in a remote corner of Hissar district of Haryana. It can boast of an electric sub-station, a sprawling housing colony, a marble rest house, a gas depot, an administrative complex, a 30-bed hospital and a degree college. But then this is the village of Bhajan Lal, the Haryana chief minister. In this village more than 30 years ago, a poor Bishnoi lad, a migrant from Bahawalpur in Pakistan, began his climb to political notoriety. Bhajan Lal started his life as a *pheriwala*, selling women's garments but within a short time switched to carrying *ghee* from Adampur to Ludhiana. It was on one such trip that Bhajan Lal first learnt the power of money. He was travelling ticketless on the train and was hauled up by the ticket collector. Bhajan quickly bribed him and slipped away. The man with the right instincts made steady progress in his business and soon caught the eye of Pokar Mal, a middleman in the grain *mandi* of Adampur. The two joined hands, became "dharmabhais" and set up

their office in shop number 107 of the Adampur grain *mandi*. "Pokar Mal Bhajan Lal, commission agents" read the name. But even after starting a legitimate business, Bhajan Lal could not keep himself down. He was caught and arrested repeatedly for petty business offences that he was so prone to committing. In 1954, he was charged by the additional district magistrate of Hissar under section 120 of the Indian Railways. In 1958, Bhajan Lal was challaned for smuggling wheat into Rajasthan in a tractor and also for criminal intimidation, violence and rioting. A challan in a case of moral turpitude in 1962, charges of committing dacoity, robbery and for causing injury in 1969 and again—as recently as 1974—another challan for moral turpitude. Such was his record that he had to take refuge in politics in order to shield himself.

Politics did not corrupt Bhajan Lal, he corrupted politics. He began as a *sarpanch* (village headman) and became chairman of the pan-

chayat samiti of Adampur before being elected an MLA from Adampur in 1968 for the first time. Since then, he has never lost his seat.

In 1970 Bhajan Lal's status was enhanced when Bansi Lal, the then chief minister, picked him for a cabinet berth but that, say politicians in Haryana, could never sober him up, he was in fact given the post because of his diverse "talents." It is said that in those days smuggling of wheat and liquor across the border into Rajasthan was a profitable business and Bhajan Lal could not be kept from having his share in it. Bhajan Lal was dropped from the Bansi Lal cabinet in 1975 again in dubious circumstances. A woman from Panipat registered a case of rape against him. Bhajan Lal was thrown out and according to some, paraded through the streets of Kurukshetra on a donkey's back, his face blackened!

Despite all this, Bhajan Lal continued to be a popular man in his native Adampur, its people refusing to punish him for all his notoriety. His shop in the Adampur grain *mandi* still stands. Pokar Mal—though he maintains his brotherly love for Bhajan Lal and continues to be a recipient of his former partner's benevolence—has split away to set up his own shop a few blocks away in the grain *mandi*. Shop 107 is now in the name of the two sons of Bhajan Lal. Of course, they do not run the place. The chief minister's sons spend most of their time in Chandigarh. It is Bhajan Lal's trusted aides who hold the fort instead at what certainly looks like the most prosperous shop in the *mandi*—with its wall to wall carpets, sofa sets and dozens of garden chairs. The Bhajan-*mandali* squatting there pooh-poohs the "lies" of the opposition party perpetrated against a "great man like our Chaudhari Saheb." The bespectacled, old *munshi* who claims to have been with Bhajan Lal for the last 30 years swears by his life that Bhajan was never arrested or even chargesheeted. But he would rather not talk about how, 30 years ago, Bhajan Lal began his career in Adampur. He knows very well that there is more about his "rehabilitation" to be hidden than revealed.

Santoshan Thakur, New Delhi



Pokar Mal's shop in Adampur



Bhajan Lal surrounded by his supporters

wives of his nephews, his nephews themselves and even his brother Manphool Singh. They have concentrated their attention on Fatehabad where thousands of square yards of land—mostly municipal land—had been either made over or leased over for long periods to relatives of Bhajan Lal. And that the Haryana chief minister has been taking active interest in some of these cases is quite obvious—his officers have been openly requesting for files and papers concerning various plots of land from the local authorities on grounds that the chief minister wanted to be “acquainted with them.” Now a new chargesheet, exposing more land deals of the Haryana chief minister and his relatives is ready and the opposition leaders plan to present a second memorandum to the Prime Minister. This time, one of them said, “we are really going for his head.”

The allegations levelled by the opposition in their memorandum concern only a few aspects of the kind of corruption that the Bhajan Lal government has ushered in, the

attack is limited to the Bishnoi family and the land transactions of the ‘first family’ of Haryana. If an overview of the seven years of Bhajan Lal’s rule is taken things look much more frightening. ‘Haryana today’ in the words of D.R. Chaudhary, a Rohtak based journalist who has reported on Haryana for a long time now, ‘is a sick state. Crudity, corruption, blatant violation of all accepted norms in running the administration, political horse trading, politicians accepting big amounts from business and industrialists, are all everyday occurrences. Corruption has crossed all limits in Haryana. A man like A.R. Antulay appears a novice when compared to political operators in this state.’

In 1982, Rizk Ram, then a Congress(I) dissident, had presented three memoranda to the state Assembly making various allegations. He said the Haryana State Electricity Board had placed an order for mini turbines with a Japanese firm, ignoring the claim of a French one which offered more liberal terms. The Japanese firm, he alleged, was enter-

tained because it had paid Rs 7.5 lakhs to get the order. Another officer had wormed his way into the state electricity board by allegedly paying Rs four lakhs even though he had several corruption charges pending against him. These are small cases for Haryana and there are too many like these. It is not for nothing that most ministers of the Bhajan Lal cabinet—and indeed most Congress(I) MLAs—are said to have built up huge assets within a short space of time. But nobody seems to have cared over the years.

Given this background, will the new memorandum presented to the Prime Minister yield any results? Opposition leaders say this is a test case for the Prime Minister’s claim of providing a clean administration to the country. The case against Bhajan Lal, finally, has taken concrete shape. The original documents given to Rajiv Gandhi along with the memorandum should be enough to convince him of the authenticity of the charges. But who knows what moves Bhajan Lal has up his sleeves to counter the moves against him?

SPECIAL REPORT

The Trial of Our Time

Madhu Jain describes the trial of the men who murdered Indira Gandhi



SPECIAL REPORT

8 July 1985 There is an air of suspense outside Tihar Jail. No one is sure whether there is going to be a trial or not. But strangely a quarter of an hour before the beginning of the second session of the Indira Gandhi assassination case, there is hardly any sign of life outside the massive gates of the Tihar Jail. The long narrow road to the jail where a makeshift courtroom has been set up for the trial is also desolate. It is only when the reporters approach the jail superintendent for passes that a flurry of activity begins. Some journalists enter the courtroom in ward number one even before the registrar and without being frisked. Outside the entrance to the jail, at the end of the path one can see the familiar faces of Trilok Singh, the sturdy looking father of Satwant Singh and the relatives of Balbir Singh and Kehar Singh—the other two accused in the case. The atmosphere inside the makeshift court is informal. Balbir Singh chats with his lawyer P P Grover for over five minutes outside the bullet proof enclosure before the judge arrives. As the three accused

are escorted in by plainclothesmen of the Tamil Nadu police, all eyes turn to Satwant Singh. (As Tamil Nadu has a surplus police force, some of them are deputed to Delhi.) Dressed in a chocolate T shirt and dark tight fit trousers, Satwant limps. A bullet still lies embedded in his spine, as his father had pointed out to the journalists during the last session when the three accused were made to stand in the bullet proof cubicle for some time. Satwant Singh smiles at newsmen and touches his defence counsel, P N Lekhi's feet. He appears quite nonchalant—almost a look of unconcern, even while the charges are being read out by the special judge, Mahesh Chandra, under sections 120B/302/34/307 IPC and section 27 of the Arms Act.

Kehar Singh, sporting a *kesari* band under his dark blue turban, sits quietly in the bullet proof cubicle (curiously enough, this glass structure has a crack on it). Balbir Singh, the former sub inspector for Prime Minister's security, is the only one who listens to the proceedings with in wrapt attentions taking down notes furiously.

He stands up after the charges are read and says in English "I could plead guilty if I could get a satisfactory explanation as to what my act is." His counsel P P Grover interrupts and tells him to sit down.

It takes some time before the charges can be read out and the trial can begin. Mr Lekhi insists that the four policemen in plainclothes should leave the room, fearing that the policemen would later, brief the other witnesses. "I will not permit a mock trial. The process of justice is being lynched before this court," he says. The defence counsel also raises many objections. He wants all court proceedings to be tape recorded, a wall of the room brought down to enlarge it, an air conditioner, and a guarantee that the room is not bugged. There is also some exchange of words with the prosecutor, Mr K I Arora over the list of witnesses. Lekhi objects to the prosecution's calling the witnesses in stages. Thus, he says, is an attempt to get the defence to "show their hand." Mr Lekhi also wants to cross examine R K Dhawan and M I Totedar for two hours each day for three to four



Advocate P.N. Lekhi (left) talking to Satwant Singh's father, Trilok Singh

Mediapix

days. The court adjourns at about 4.30 pm. All the three accused had pleaded not guilty.

9 July 1985. Attention now shifts to the two witnesses. ASI Raghubir Singh (who was the duty officer at the Tughlak Road police station on the morning of 31 October 1984 when he received the wireless message) testifies that on 31 October 1984 there had been shooting in the Prime Minister's house and he had recorded the message at 9.28 am. ASI Dharam Singh who was on duty at the TMC gate between 1 Sardarjang Road and 1 Akbar Road on 31 October 1984 testifies that he was there till 7.30 am when he handed over charge to Beant Singh, along with a revolver, 18 live cartridges and a walkie-talkie.

The proceedings in the court drum along until a revolver, labelled Exhibit B1 is brought out of a sealed brown paper bag. What follows is an elementary lesson in the use of a revolver. During the testimony of the two policemen, Satwant Singh begins to take down notes and listens attentively. The judge asks Dharam Singh to hold up the revolver and show it to those present. The judge examines it carefully for nearly five minutes followed by a discussion on the revolver—whether it is a .38 calibre revolver and why. The magazine of the gun is opened.

During the cross-examination by P.P. Grover, counsel for Kehar Singh



A file photograph of Satwant Singh

and Balbir Singh (initially Balbir Singh had trouble finding a lawyer to defend him) ASI Raghubir Singh, suggests that the FIR filed by Raghubir Singh was "deliberately written in long hand and a blank space was left so that it would be manipulated later. Grover also gets the first witness to admit that he had not changed the FIR to murder after he had heard on the radio that Mrs Gandhi had died, nor was there any

FIR on the death of Beant Singh and the injuries of Satwant Singh.

The second day of the trial has its moments of excitement. Grover files a petition on behalf of Mr Veerendra Singh, a shopkeeper from Old Rajinder Nagar, requesting the court to protect him from officers of the special investigating team, who, he says, are trying to force him to depose evidence against Balbir Singh. Veerendra Singh in his petition says that Veerendra Singh was taken to the Jamuna velodrome on 4 November 1984 and tortured to be released consequently and arrested again on 5 July this year. In one of his many asides Lekhi mutters "this is a most beautiful thing from ASIAD the Jamuna velodrome is now being used as a torture, the police have their own sport with the most sophisticated equipment."

There is much to and fro motion in the room as Lekhi makes sure that the witnesses are not within the precincts of the jail. Lekhi says "I would like the witnesses to stand outside because the jail is the court room, I do not know who is in the crowd is a peeping, Tom or a eavesdropping." At which point the prosecution counsel says "If they stay outside, you will say that the police are coaching them."

Lekhi replies "The police is already coaching them." He then wants to go outside to see if the witnesses have been moved. The judge breaks in "Do you think it is respectable for you to do that?" Lekhi says "Yes I feel very respectable." It is only after the long exchanges that the witnesses begin to testify in the little wooden witness box at the foot of the judge's desk. At the end of the testimony of the two ASIs Lekhi makes an application for summoning, medical records from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, Mrs Gandhi's death, the records on anesthesia, records of cotton notes, report of the x-rays, as well as the attendance register of the Post Graduate Forensic Medicine class and call book of the emergency ward. The press is asked to leave the room, the lawyers huddle together to converse with their clients while the relatives of the accused try and speak to them through the hinges of the bullet proof enclosure.

10 July, 1985. It has just stopped raining. The temperature is cool inside the court but the atmosphere is slightly more charged, Lekhi suggests during the cross-examination of Dharam Singh that "the most protected lady of the country could not



A scene of the rioting in Patna

K.M. K.S.R.

have died, if it had or been for an internal plot" Lekhi quotes from a paper "Mrs Gandhi had told her staff that she did not know, where she would be at the time of her birthday she was conscious at that time about a plot but she was unable to accuse anybody, that is because of a conspiracy within her family."

Mr Lekhi's question at this point of the cross examination related to whether the witness had ever overheard family matters being discussed, particularly regarding the fight between Indira Gandhi and Maneka Gandhi. The question is disallowed.

The duty roster of the Prime Minister's house is later produced in the court and in his cross examination, Lekhi asks Dharam Singh why the arrow marked in ink against the entry which showed that the duty of another policeman, Jai Narain, had been changed with Beant Singh at 7.30 that morning was thicker and darker. "Did you put that *nishan*?" Lekhi asks Dharam Singh who replies in the negative.

ASI Dharam Singh says that while answering questions relating to the possibility of arms being smuggled into the PM's house from Akbar Road and how many police men were involved in the security at the Prime Minister's house, says that there were at any given time, at least 35 SAI carbines and 21 revolvers in the compound and there were also seven assistant commissioners of police (ACP) of whom three would be personal security officers of the Prime Minister, 60 sub inspectors, 45 inspectors and about 450 constables. At this point Lekhi interrupts. "There are 118 officers and 450 constables to protect a three to four acre area and only 25,000 constables for Delhi even a dictator never had this amount of security."

All the while, the three accused listen with great attention, particularly Satwant Singh. But when the sten gun with which he allegedly killed Mrs Gandhi is brought in, (covered in a white cloth with red seals), he sits up. He begins writing and while the sten gun is being held up, he almost jumps up, pointing to some point on his right shoulder. There is some confusion about the butt number, it is supposed to be 80, but it reads as 30. Lekhi also picks up the gun and examines the locks at which point Satwant Singh, in a *kesari* turban (but with the same white bush shirt with a blue print) and the same Punjabi gold chappals as the previous day) begins to say. "Sir, *woh tho*" and the judge gestures towards him asking him to sit down.



Inside a camp for riot victims in Delhi

The cross examination of constable Sukh Bir Singh who had issued the SAF carbine to Satwant Singh in prison. He says that the magazine of the gun could fire 34 rounds and that when on automatic position it would not take more than four seconds to empty the carbine. He also adds that a bullet which pierces the body could not travel farther than 80 feet.

The fourth witness, ACP Balram

Nath then takes the stand. He was the one who identified the body of Indira Gandhi on 31 October. During the cross examination by Lekhi, the ACP says that he learned about the death of the Prime Minister at 10 am that day. Outside Tihar Jail, the ACP says that he had made a mistake—it was at ten in the morning that he had only heard of the shooting and not of the death of Indira Gandhi.



Jathedars raise their hands in support of Sant Longowal at a meeting in the Golden Temple

Punjab: Stoking the Fire

The Akalis threaten to resume their agitation

Phase Minister Ranv Gandhi and the Akali Dal president, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, are involved in a game of public deceit. While for the last one month Sant Longowal has been repeatedly saying that the Akali *morcha* (agitation) is continuing, the Prime Minister in a recent interview to an independent British television company declared that the government could not give any more concessions to the Akalis until they withdrew their agitation.

What happened in *morcha* is the TV talking act. The truth is that the Akalis are not involved in any *morcha* or agitation in Punjab today. Reacting to the recent statements of Sant Longowal and the Prime Minister, Mrs Rajinder Kaur, president of the Istri (women's) Akali Dal and daughter of the legendary leader Master Tara Singh, remarked, "Ask Rajiv Gandhi what agitation he is

talking about. There is no Akali *morcha* in Punjab today." Her daughter Navjot, a journalist, said: "Imagine, the *morcha* is being fought



Sant Longowal

from the Golden Temple and hardly any Akali leader has been even visiting the place during the last few months."

The Akalis had launched their much publicised *dharmayudh morcha* for the acceptance of the party's controversial Anandpur Sahib Resolution in August 1982. It was started from the Golden Temple. The former Punjab chief minister, Parkash Singh Badal, was the first senior Akali leader who courted arrest with over 2,000 party volunteers in Amritsar. Later, till the army action in the Golden Temple in June last year, the Akali Dal volunteers courted arrest every day. That was, in fact, a symbolic way of carrying on the agitation from August 1982 till the time Operation Bluestar was executed.

With Operation Bluestar, the Akali *morcha* petered out. All the senior Akali leaders were thrown behind bars, and the second rung of the

SPECIAL REPORT

party leadership which took over command could not keep the *morcha* going, they could not get enough party volunteers to court arrest.

As part of their agitation the Akali Dal also gave calls for action programmes like the Rail Roko and Rasta Roko. But after Operation Bluestar, the party has not given any such call. Sant Longowal insists that the *morcha* is still going on and will continue till all conditions like the release of Sikh army deserters and abolition of special courts are accepted.

Will the Akalis now begin a fresh agitation in Punjab? At a party convention on 8 July in Anandpur Sahib it was resolved that the new action plan would be announced on 20 August. In the past six months the Akalis had often threatened to announce the party's new action plan. Soon after his release, Sant Longowal had declared that the party would revive its agitation.

The media has now become the battleground for the Akali agitation. Both the Akalis and the government are using the media to project their respective viewpoints. Statements of Sant Longowal and other important party leaders find a prominent place in newspapers. *Doordarshan* and *All India Radio*. But the Akali leaders have nothing new to say. They keep attacking the government. Their grievances and demands are the government is persecuting the Sikhs who are treated like second class citizens in the country, release army deserters, abolish special courts and release Sikhs who are in jails. They keep repeating the same demands and the newspapers only exacerbate the issue. Over the radio and *Doordarshan*, Sant Longowal talks of Hindu-Sikh unity, condemning extremism and terrorism. But he never forgets to add that the Akali *morcha* will continue till their demands are accepted. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, has his "doors always open for talks with Akalis."

In all his interviews and press conferences, Rajiv Gandhi mentions that a solution to the Punjab problem is just round the corner since he feels that Sant Longowal has taken many positive steps recently to create a congenial atmosphere in Punjab. At his first press conference on 7 July, after entering office in November 1984, Rajiv Gandhi congratulated the Akali chief for taking these steps. The next day the Akali Dal president, at a party convention at Anandpur Sahib, reciprocated the PM's "gesture" by putting forward two more conditions. He also threatened to announce an action



Pro-Khalistan supporters raise slogans during a meeting of the Akali Dal (Longowal) inside the Golden Temple on 9 June '85

'Holding Elections in Punjab Now Will Create Another Problem'

Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, Akali Dal (Longowal)
secretary general, told SUNDAY

Q: Does the Akali Dal propose to start a fresh agitation?

A: Our agitation has not stopped. So there is no question of starting a fresh agitation.

Q: At the Anandpur Sahib conclave your party declared that an action plan would be announced on 20 August. Do you propose to give a call for a Punjab bandh or rasta roko as you had been doing in the past?

A: Sant Longowal has appointed a five member committee to decide on the action plan to be announced on 20 August. The committee will submit its suggestions to the party president, who will take a final decision in this regard.

Q: Sant Longowal says the Akali morcha is continuing. The Prime Minister has urged the Akalis to call off the agitation. But the fact is that after the June 1984 army action in the Golden Temple, the Akali dharamyudh morcha has been suspended.

A: I told you earlier that nothing was suspended. During the army action, Sant Longowal, who gave the call for the morcha, was arrested. Afterwards, the agitation has been continuing in one form or another.

Q: What kind of agitation are you running now?

A: The party conventions and mass-contact programmes are all part of the morcha.

Q: What are the party's main demands now?

A: There are certain requirements, not demands, which the government will have to fulfil to assuage the hurt feelings of the Sikhs. If these requirements are fulfilled, the faith of the Sikhs, which has been shaken, will be strengthened. For example, a general amnesty should be granted for Sikh army men who left the barracks in a fit of rage following the army-action in the Golden Temple. Then the government should abolish the special courts in Punjab, punish those guilty of rioting and give compensation to the victims of the November riots immediately. As regards our demands, they are the same in the light of the Anandpur Sahib resolution.

Q: How do you sum up the Punjab situation today?

A: The situation has been totally spoiled, both by the government and the Congress(I). Now there are accepted instances when terrorists were created, fed and patronised by the senior leaders of the ruling party. Look at the case of Gurinder Singh and his links with Santokh

Singh Randhawa. Has any Akali leader been accused of protecting the terrorists?

Q: The Prime Minister has recently stated that a solution to the Punjab problem is round the corner. Do you think so?

A: We are surprised at the statements of the Prime Minister. One day he says he is ready to accommodate us to any extent and then the next day he puts up some conditions.

Q: If elections are announced will the Akali Dal take part in them?

A: Announcing elections without solving the Punjab problem first will amount to creating another problem. Then it will result in permanent bitterness.

Q: What will be the mode if a fresh agitation is launched by the Akali Dal in Punjab in the near future?

A: The Shiromani Akali Dal is committed to remain peaceful and non-violent.

Q: Will you take along Baba Joginder Singh also in launching any fresh stir?

A: We will ask all Punjabis to join us for pressing our demands. We will certainly ask Baba Joginder Singh too to extend his support to us.

Interviewed by Sanjeev Gaur

Punjab police stand guard as Akali volunteers stop traffic during a Rasta Roko agitation



SPECIAL REPORT



Punjab Governor Arjun Singh addressing a Baisakhi day gathering at Jallianwalla Bagh

plan on 20 August.

According to political observers there is an obvious change in Sant Longowal's attitude vis-à-vis the government after his release from jail four months back. But Mrs Rajinder Kaur thinks otherwise. She told *ST* that Longowal can never have the same stance. He keeps fluctuating. That is Longowal's distinct feature.

Sant Longowal's critic, however, are of the opinion that the Mahi chief has adopted a conciliatory posture towards the government by bringing in the theme of Hindu-Sikh unity and addressing joint convention of both communities in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and at some place in Punjab. Recently a senior

state intelligence officer said: 'Rajiv Gandhi is killing Longowal politically by building him up. Longowal will lose his image in the Sikh community if he is congratulated by Rajiv Gandhi, whom the community hates for obvious reasons.'

There is no doubt that the situation in Punjab today is fluid. Terrorist activities have been revived. The attempt on the life of the Ludhiana district chief, A.P. Pinder, the killing of a police constable and a police informer in Amritsar recently are just pointers to the coming events. But the Akalis are not at all in any position to resume their agitation.

On 13 July 1985, Sant Longowal ruled out immediate resumption of talks with the government or a return to normalcy in Punjab. While declaring that he would be glad to see an end to the Punjab crisis, he declared that he did not see any prospect of this as the concessions announced by the government had not yet been implemented by them. Normalcy could be restored only with the acceptance of his seven-point charter of demands.

The day before eleven men of a Punjab battalion were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment ranging from four to 12 years after being found guilty of joining a mutiny in the armed forces on 10 June last year. The 11 deserters formed part of a band of 133 runaways who had fled from a Punjab battalion in the Pune suburb a last year. Sant Longowal described the sentences handed out to the army deserters in Punjab as unjust.

It is curious that while Sant Longowal now feels sufficiently confident to think of taking 'action' against those leaders who have joined Baba Joginder Singh's group, he still finds it necessary to match them in keeping the tension alive in Punjab. What is significant to note here is that the Sant cannot be unaware of the consequences of his threatened action plan. In spite of the PM's assertion that Punjab was moving closer towards a solution, actually this was far from true.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar



Dr Rajinder Kaur (left) being taken away in a police vehicle

"We do not Have Enough Good Judges"

Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Y V Chandrachud told Kuldip Nayyar

Q: Before I ask you questions on the judiciary I want you to tell me about your land deals

A Two plots of land were purchased in the name of my wife and one in the name of my son. We are not Delhiwallas. We don't know where the lands are. There were advertisements in several newspapers saying that farm lands were for sale. There were half a dozen advertisements every day and we saw them for months. We have no house, we have no place to live anywhere in the world. Till today I have neither applied for a house nor an apartment anywhere. When these advertisements appeared we thought our young boy who was then in law college would be practising law in Delhi. There was every chance that he would settle down in Delhi. We had no house in Delhi. So we purchased these two plots. But I have never seen them.

As a result of these advertisements an estate agent and four or five people came. They said, 'Purchase these.' We asked if it was legal to purchase them. They said, 'Hundreds of persons are purchasing them. It would be wrong on my part to name these persons. Why should I involve them?' Very highly placed persons in the government—their names were mentioned. Letters of two or three were also shown. They were also purchasing these lands. So why should there be anything illegal? After inquiries with the land department these lands were purchased. In fact after 15 months these lands were purchased. They (the DDA) acquired the lands. After the lands were acquired litigation about these lands never went to court. There were some other lands which were acquired 15 years ago in Delhi but still no compensation was paid. That litigation came to the Delhi High Court. In that litigation the Delhi High Court held that if the lands were acquired from private persons for public use you must at least compensate them by allotting alternative plots. In that case the argument was they should be given



Former Chief Justice Y V Chandrachud

some other plots. The Delhi High Court held that if you acquire one acre give 200 sqm in exchange. Thereafter the acquiring authority (DDA) wrote letters to all persons whose lands were acquired. Not to me. Not to us specially.

These lands were in the name of my wife and son and they have nothing to do with it. I own them. My son was 20 years old, my wife has no money for it. She has never served anywhere. She belongs to a middle-class family so she has no money for all this. We purchased this for Rs 7,000 each. Now after the Delhi High Court gave the judgement it is a totally unconnected batch of cases. The DDA wrote letters to all saying that it has been decided to give alternative plots of land to persons whose lands were acquired since the Delhi High Court had so decided. I would say frankly, we are looking forward to getting plots. We thought we would build a house. Now four years have gone by. It was in 1980.

Q: How much does this land measure?

A I don't know, believe me I have not seen the area even. After this we have to go for the sale deed. None of us went for the sale deed. The person who purchased the land needs to be present for registration. The registrar sent us the certified sale deed. You will be surprised to know that unfortunately I can't find the certified deed or the copies. My feeling is that I had sent them to the DDA. I will tell you why I sent them to the DDA. They acquired the land in 1981. Within a year after acquiring the land in 1982 after the judgement came the DDA wrote letters to all persons. It was perhaps from the land estate officer or something. We received the letters sometime after the judgement—after two or three months. Now my retirement came near. We asked the DDA when are you likely to give us the plots and what will be the price of those plots? They said it will take eight to ten years for us to get these plots. They said they had to comply with the High Court judgement otherwise they would hold them in contempt of court. So what we have done is we have written letters to people saying that we have no land to offer to anyone. They said, 'Hundreds of people purchased lands, we have no lands to give to anyone.' So I asked, 'How are you going to give us lands after eight or ten years?' They said they have a place called Vasantkunj, which is near Vasant Vihar, and 'it will take another eight years to develop, after that it will be possible for us to give you land.' I said, 'If you give us the plots after eight years what the hell we will do with those plots?' After ten years 200 sqm will cost Rs five lakh. This will be the market value after ten years. Today, it is Rs 1000—at Vasantkunj. In two years it will be Rs two lakhs. After ten years the market price will be five lakhs. After all the High Court has not told us that the plots should be sold at the prevailing rates when lands are acquired. So I said, 'You will give us the plot at the cost of Rs five or six lakhs each. I do not have lakhs of rupees. Today if you give us the plot I cannot buy it.' They said, 'If

CONVERSATION

you do not want the plots, say so.' We have written letters to them which are on the records. I will show them to you. We have given up our rights to the plots. We gave up our rights to the plots in 1983-1984. They are useless fellows. SUNDAY magazine says that we will be given plots at a cost of three lakhs each which means the price of the two plots would be six lakhs. The market price would be 35 lakhs. Therefore, the Chief Justice will make 30 lakhs. Now when will they give us the plots? They did not ask whether the Chief Justice has got Rs six lakhs to buy them. I want to show you the letters I wrote to the Prime Minister and the law minister yesterday. I am going to retire on the 12th. I have no place to live in. I belong to Bombay but I have no house there. We have been in Delhi, we have no place in Delhi. I will have to vacate this house in a month or so after I retire. We can retain the house for a month, maximum. They might make some arrangements but after that we will have to move out of this house. After the second month, it would be Rs 10,000. That is when a businessman will not be able to afford it. So I have written letters to them; will you kindly see that some house is made available to us? Now I will tell you another thing. The DDA has promised to give us a flat I said, 'If you give us a flat it will be no more useful to us than these speculative theoretical plots of land on which we will make Rs 35 lakhs. We do not want Rs 35 lakhs. We do not have Rs six lakhs either. You should give us a plot within our means. They said they can give us a plot at the prevailing rate—Rs two lakhs. I withdrew my provident fund and paid that money. But the flats are not ready.

Q: That must be very small then?

A: But then you must have a place to live in. Now this is the position. We have given up our right. We have written to DDA expressly and specifically mentioning that we have given up our rights to get the plots. So we are not going to get the plots.

Q: Do you have any regrets?

A: I tell you that I have no regrets in my life at all. I have never regretted that I did not make money because nobody compelled me to become a judge. I did it because I liked it. I took great interest in my work. I may have delivered wrong judgements, bad judgements, but that is not my regret. I tried to do whatever little good I could do. But my real regret is that if a Chief Justice of India is vested with certain administrative powers, then he is compelled to exercise those powers in a certain

way (by denying) false reports appearing against him in newspapers. And how do they distinguish between a politician and a Chief Justice or judge? It is the responsibility of the press to protect the reputation of a judge. I feel horrible (about allegations made in the SUNDAY report). Should somebody not have asked me about it?

Q: Including..

A: Not even a telephone call came saying: this is what we have been

Q: Sir, looking back, you said very rightly that during the course of your duties you have to face some unpleasant things, some kind of pressure indirectly. I do not know whether it is true or not. There is also a feeling that the government brings pressure on the Chief Justice. After all, you have to recommend somebody for judgeship, and so you go along ultimately. Am I wrong?

A: No, I will say that the government brings no pressure with regard



The incoming and outgoing Chief Justices, P.N. Bhagwati and Y.V. Chandrachud

informed or we want to ask you about this, your side of it. If you do not want to say, we shall say that we put it to you, but there was no comment.

Q: Yes, I am quite sure. But this apart, your comment is on the falling standards.

A: Yes, it is terrible when you pressurise the Chief Justice of India (when I was in office). I am nobody. I will leave this institution, another gentleman will come. This institution will go on. No institution will wait for an individual. But imagine, in the course of his administrative duties, the Chief Justice will have to do so many unpleasant things, and so many important things. I think this is the contempt of the highest kind. There is a judgement of the Supreme Court by Karlekar, which says, if you interfere with the administration of the court it is contempt (of court). The Constitution says it is contempt. I firmly take the view that no judge, especially the Chief Justice, should ever issue a contempt notice to the press or to anyone and I have never done it in my life, except once.

to any appointment to the Supreme Court. But the government does suggest some names. I can tell you what Mrs Gandhi once said to me. She said, 'If you do not agree with the suggestion made by us, then we will not appoint that person.' She said, 'We may have a grouse against you for not agreeing to the names suggested, but we will respect your judgement in regard to appointments. In these eight years not a single appointment to which I did not agree has been made. Appointments which I opposed were not made. Names were recommended, names were strongly pressed. When I did not agree, those names were dropped. They were recommended again. I again opposed them and they were dropped.

Q: After the judgement on the judges' case did you not feel weak?

A: Of course, I did feel weak. My statements are yet to be explained. I will tell you why. You know these things very well. You will not allow us to utter anything in the house. It does not matter. We will not be

allowed because we are in a minority. But we will allow you to do anything because we will go on shouting. The government has a great power of filibustering. I will tell you what happens. I say this man must be appointed Chief Justice. The government has got the power of appointing an acting Chief Justice. The government says, 'We are not doing anything against you. But you see he deserves to be appointed. Let us consider it.' Now you see, if that person is kept as acting Chief Justice for say, six months, eight months, one year, two years—acting Chief Justices have been kept in office for three years. Now I find that the administration, the High Court is suffering grievously. Then what do I do? I have to give in. I have to give in not because I knuckle under the government's pressure but in the interest of the institution. Or else what happens is this: supposing there is no agreement between me and the government on certain appointments to the Supreme Court, not to the High Court, no appointments are made. As I told, Mrs Gandhi never overruled me. She said, 'You are a very experienced person. How can we overrule you?' She said, believe me 'What is your interest? For whom are you fighting? Are you asking for anything for yourself? You have not asked me to make me this, make me that.' She said, 'Probably you have not seen the faces of these people for whom you are fighting. I genuinely accept this because what you are telling me is correct.' But she used to say, 'Chief Justice, you do not know my difficulties. You are a very lucky person. You hold a very high office. I don't. There is nobody who can challenge your authority. My authority is challenged by my party men every day. My partymen come and tell me that the Chief Justice wants that man to be appointed. I know you have no politics in you. But I am a political leader, I have to carry my party with me. I have to carry my people with me. I cannot displease my own people. My difficulties are political difficulties.'

Q So you are really against all this. But don't you think this phrase 'acting Chief Justice' is terrible?

A Yes, terrible. In Allahabad, Madhya Pradesh and Calcutta no appointments were made for two years, three years. Eventually, you do not know what to do. In Maharashtra, there are 12 vacancies. No appointments have been made for the last one year. Now everybody shouts that we do nothing!

Q But you have made recommendations.

A Everything has been filled. But we don't know where. Now if ten vacancies are not filled for say, two years that means now you want 20 people in place of ten, because now for one year, ten people have not been functioning. Now in such a situation, the Chief Justice of India is driven to anger. You see, the government has got every weapon in its hands. It may not differ with you, but it may not agree with you. So the vacancies are kept unfilled.

Q What would you suggest? Should there be a time limit?

A Personally I think the entire process of appointment of Justices should be democratised. There should be a body which should sit and consider the suitability of the persons for appointment to the High Courts and the Supreme Court. This power should not rest in clandestine archives. The Chief Justice of India may have personal prejudices. Why should he have so much weight? Why do we not have an open discussion? Let it be a kind of 'closed door meeting' with the Chief Justice of India and two more senior-most judges of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of the High Court, the concerned chief minister of the state and the law minister of the Government of India. Let them meet and discuss the matter openly. Today what happens is that they can make



I am nobody. I will leave this institution, another gentleman will come. This institution will go on. No institution will wait for an individual.

allegations that he is a communist, he is an RSS man. In the Janata regime they used to say, 'Do not appoint him, he is a Congress(I) man.' These allegations are mostly untrue.

Q I met Chief Justice Sikri, after the supersession of judges. He said he did not allow Justice Krishna Iyer to be appointed chief justice because of his commune's leanings.

A He went on record as saying so. Krishna Iyer was one of our most learned judges, one of the finest judges I have seen. But you know before he came he was a communist. He was better than so many others, a dedicated judge, a judge with an ideal. Today what happens is that some names are suggested.

Everything is confidential. One chief minister said, 'I oppose him as the Chief Justice of the High Court because this man belongs to a particular community and if he is appointed the balance between the communities will be upset.' But I made a very strong minute and I said that once you introduce these reservations for the higher caste, I can understand that he is a scheduled caste, you appoint him. But I cannot understand that there are seven or so higher castes and he belongs to one of them and we do not want him—it could be the end of all independence. But you know in spite of the chief minister's opposing the name, that man was appointed.

Q But how do you react to these transfers?

A Well, my views on transfers are widely known. I make speeches on them. At the Chief Justices conference I made a speech on this, copies of which have been sent to the government. The government knows of my views too well. I firmly take the view that the power be vested with the Chief Justice. I have had the advantage of being the Chief Justice for a long time. There is a certain understanding between me and the government. But unfortunately our tradition or history is that people become Chief Justices for a year, year and a half or two years. Within a year or a year and a half you do not develop, you are not understood. They do not know what is in your mind. I had a long time, so they know that I am genuinely opposed to transfers. I have told them I am opposed to transfers. They did not transfer a single High Court judge during my tenure.

Q But they transferred Chief Justices.

A After the judgement on the judges case, not before.

Q But don't you think that some

CONVERSATION

body should challenge this judgment

A I myself think that having out side Chief Justices has two sides. The good side and the bad side. As a Chief Justice of India I cannot deny that some Chief Justices of the High Courts have to be transferred. I cannot deny that because they are not functioning properly. There are factions in the High Courts amongst the judges. Then the power also is automatically divided into factions. There are no factions in the Supreme Court fortunately. We are 18 (judges) here. We meet every day in the Chief Justice's chamber before we go to our respective chambers. Our seats are fixed. And there is an advantage when you discuss among yourselves. We meet at 10.20 am every day. The meeting in the chamber of the Chief Justice produces free thinking. We talk of this thing and that then we go to our respective courts. It produces understanding and clears misunderstandings.

But in the High Court because of the number they don't meet. In the Bombay High Court there was a glorious tradition of 100 years when all the judges met in the Chief Justice's chamber at 10.15 am. The High Court closed at one o'clock. I am sure that the judges don't come now. One thing is that the number has become unwieldy. They were 12. Now they are 40. You know this was to permit check on good behaviour and punctuality. They were not up to quarter to twelve which means everybody has to be punctual. If punctuality has now gone, judges don't sit till 1 pm at High Court. They rise before the time. In the recess they don't want to come back for half an hour or 45 minutes. There is a tremendous fall in values. There are both plus and minus point.

But unfortunately there have been factions exist not ideologically, but ideologically. If there are ideological factions I can understand. I can understand somebody fighting with D. A. Desai. You are deciding every case in favour of tenant. It is nonsense. And Desai would appreciate it. Ideological factions are not factions, they are only differences. They can all be very good friends. But differences based on caste? At the risk of impropriety, I will mention one High Court specifically the High Court of Rajasthan, which has been destroyed by casteism. There are Brahmins, Aggarwals, etc. The High Court of Allahabad too is totally caste ridden. I will cite an interesting instance. They didn't want Satish Chandra. He is an Aggar

wal. Now the Khaistyas want Brahmins. They came to me in a group of hundred. They said, 'Satish Chandra is no good, transfer him.' I said, 'So long as you are agitating against Satish Chandra I will not agree to transfer him.' They said, 'You are the authority to appoint the Chief Justices.' I said, 'I cannot agree. You suspend the agitation. I will decide coolly and let you know what I have decided and I will take up the matter with the government as orders will have to be passed by the government. I can only make recommendations.' I told this group, 'All right, if Justice Satish Chandra is transferred, the next seniormost person, Justice Yasodanand, will become the Chief Justice. Now among the group were Brahmins and Khaistyas. They said, 'Yes, Yes, Yasodanand can become Chief Justice. They all went away. Within ten minutes this group of Brahmin lawyers came back. They said, "No. Yasodanand. This Khaistya will ruin the court. Keep Satish Chandra. Don't transfer him." In fact, if there is a Brahmin Chief Justice, the Khaistyas and Aggarwals join hands and if there is an Aggarwal Chief Justice, the Brahmins and Khaistyas join hands.

In these courts which are caste ridden transfers become necessary—not because the Chief Justice is bad, but because he is unable to function. Therefore, it is for the Chief Justice

of India to see if the transfer is required. The transfer must be in the interest of the High Court. What can poor Satish Chandra do? He is an able judge, such a nice judge. He is helpless. He is the seniormost judge in the country today.

Q Has the experiment of sending a judge from one state to another yielded the desired result?

A I cannot succeed. I will tell you why. I can tell with facts and figures that this can never succeed. You know, very few people are also lucky enough as I have been. I have been there for a long tenure. It is a matter of luck. It is not the greatness of the judges, individual judges.

Q Has your tenure been the longest?

A I have been there the longest. The next longest tenure was of Justice B. P. Sinha. And there have been Chief Justices for 20, 30 or 40 days. Justice Shah was Chief Justice for 40 days out of which 15 days were holidays for Christmas. So he was Chief Justice virtually for 25 days. What can one do as Chief Justice for 25 days. The days are spent just in welcoming and giving farewells.

Now you know the tenure of Chief Justices is two or three years—in the High Courts also. Take, for instance, Maharashtra, which is not as big as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar or UP. You might ask why Maharashtra, because I know Maharashtra. There are 38 districts in Maharashtra. Now the Chief Justice has two years to go. When will he come to know the district justices? When will he visit these districts? When will he listen to the grievances of the subordinate judges? And when will he know the bar? You know Kuldip, it is a play, of human failures, human characteristics. Now the good point of transferring a Chief Justice is that if one is an outsider, he has no prejudices. He will have a fresh mind and concentrate on his work. Now what happens, you know. He finds himself such a total stranger that he will have to rely on somebody. But an active judge learns to make him depend on him.

It all depends on who grabs the new Chief Justice. He knows nothing about the court. I was mentioning caste. People don't know my caste. I am a Brahmin. Now you transfer a Brahmin Chief Justice to another High Court because he is not able to function effectively due to casteism. The problem of casteism exists there also. Now the Brahmin Chief Justice does not cease to be a Brahmin. He is a Brahmin. In Maharashtra So naturally you



No judge should join politics after retirement, and a Chief

Justice B. P. Sinha



Zail Singh being sworn in as President by Chief Justice Y.V. Chandrachud in 1982

PANA

will have to depend on the human element and the integrity of individuals. And if you don't get persons of integrity to head this institution, then transfers are no effective solution to administrative ills. On the contrary you send a man who does not know the language spoken in the state.

Q: Now would you suggest that the judgement in the judges case should be received?

A: I have an opinion that the judgement delivered in the Supreme Court in the judges case—I am saying this with great respect and more as a citizen than as the Chief Justice, who has seen the implementation, working of this judgement—requires to be reviewed in two respects. One is, the authority of the Chief Justice of India has been unjustifiably diluted by the judgement. And secondly, the privilege to documents, the decision on the privilege has to be reconsidered. Today all notings are required to be made public.

Q: Do you think the Keshavanand Bharati case also needs to be looked into?

A: I think I was in the minority in that case. I think the majority judgement is correct. I was in the group of six to seven judges. Those seven judges said that no amendment should be allowed to be made. And I think that judgement has served a

great purpose. And that judgement will ultimately be the greatest saviour of democracy in this country.

Q: Another aspect which you have mentioned is that, justice delayed is justice denied. What do you think should be done about the arrears of cases pending? At one time you said that there should be only one avenue for appeal.

A: The first thing that should be done is to reduce the (number of) appeals. But it has to be a package improvement. Now if you reduce the number of appeals, we must change the whole system. For example, in the district court, two judges may decide an appeal. This will have no further appeal. Now I am saying a very unpalatable thing. The subordinate judiciary is no longer immune to criticism on the ground of integrity as it was ten years back. I am not saying that the allegations made against them are true, or justified. But it is unfortunate that people are now talking openly, which never happened ten years back.

Then the second is that we do not have enough judges. Or I will say we do not have enough good judges. That is because the conditions of service are unrealistic. Now you cannot increase the salary of judges. It will have to be commensurate with the earnings of the members of the bar, who earn lakhs of rupees. You cannot pay lakhs of rupees to the judges. After all we are not an

affluent country. So we cannot increase their salaries to astronomical levels. But there are numerous other ways. For example, giving them some fringe benefits, or increasing pension or seeing if the predicament in which I am myself (I have no house).

Q: Also there is this proposal to have 30 Supreme Court judges. Do you approve of it?

A: I think the idea is to amend the Bill so as to have 30 judges. I do not think the idea is to appoint ten more immediately but as and when necessary. Because this building can take seven more judges. Not more than that. There are two more courtrooms, with seven chambers. Only seven more can be accommodated. There is no further place available.

Kuldip, there is another pronouncement. That is, the Chief Justice of India should not accept any public assignment, any government assignment, immediately after retirement. My thesis is that there should be a reasonable break with the past. People think that there is a *quid pro quo* in the appointment that is involved. What people think is important because the image of judges is important. What people think may not be true, but you must respect what people think. That is why I say that criticism in the newspapers should not be muffled. But the person must be given a chance to explain. The judges are entitled to some share in it. When others' grievances are highlighted, why should the judges be deprived of their chance of expressing themselves, too?

Q: Would you then say that judges should not join politics after retirement?

A: Personally I think no judge should join politics after retirement, and a Chief Justice, never.

Q: I said that because, one distinguished member of the Bombay High Court, M.C. Chagla, became a politician.

A: Well, Chagla was criticised by Motilal Setalvad on this point. And Chagla was a party to the Law Commission report where it was expressly stated that no judge should accept political assignment. Motilal Setalvad in his autobiography says that before the ink had dried Chagla accepted this assignment. But I also want to make a clarification. See, this is the point in accepting any assignment. This should be limited to the Chief Justice of India, and Chief Justices of High Courts, not to the judges, because the judges do not come into contact with the governments



Manjeet Kaur: controversial debut

Durgaprasad

Manjeet Kaur, a relatively unknown starlet, has created quite a flutter: her debut in Mirza brothers' *Misaaal* has become the talk of the industry. Reason: in the course of the film, she kisses the hero. But Manjeet is not too pleased with all this attention on her. She says, "It was basically a romantic song and I was not told anything about the kiss. I would never have done it otherwise. The song was being shot and suddenly the hero grabbed and kissed me. I was stunned. For a few moments, I didn't know what had happened. My mother who was there with me was shocked. But I couldn't do anything after the scene was shot."

It looks like *Salma Agha* is nearing the end of the road as far as her film career is concerned. *Salma*: the film in which she played the title role and on which she depended so heavily to give her career a boost, has bombed at the box-office. Now, Salma has

just one film on the floor, *Oonche Log*, and here too she has been facing a few problems: she had a big tiff with the film's hero, *Rajesh Khanna*. Her career as a singer has also not yet taken off—the record which features her and *Anil Kapoor* has not been released. While Anil dismissed all talk of their romance as "nonsense" her affair with shipping tycoon *Mahmud Sipra*, who had planned to launch a number of films, is an old story now.

After a much talked-about affair, *Zeenat Aman* and *Mazhar Khan* seem to have set the film industry agog with rumours about their secret marriage and honeymoon in Mahabaleshwar. But the couple stoutly deny it, even though their friends are still talking about the event. Ever since then, *Zeenat* seems to be avoiding the glare of publicity while *Mazhar* looks desolate. It is learnt that his wife *Rubiana* has walked

out on him and even filed her papers for divorce. *Mazhar*, on the other hand, claims that his "affair" with *Zeenat* is a thing of the past. He even says that his fling has ruined his career and his home. "I swear I have not married *Zeenat* nor do I have any intention of doing so. True we were very good friends but that was all. I don't know how and why I got into this whole thing. I was happy without it," says a repentant *Mazhar*.

Raj Babbar created quite a stir and panic when he decided to walk out of one of his films being directed by *Yash Chopra's* assistants. The provocation: one of the unit members had made a remark about *Smita Patil*, the leading lady of the film and the woman in *Raj's* life.

Apologies and pleas had no effect on *Raj* until two days later, when the senior

unit members finally persuaded him to return to the sets. The producers lost a lot of money because of *Raj's* tantrums but his eventual return was greeted with a lot of relief.

Romance seems to have spilled over from the sets and into the lives of singer-actress *Anita Reddy* and Telugu actor *Suresh*. From studios and garish sets, the couple have taken a big leap to the marriage altar.

Yet another couple has divorced. This time it is *Pratap Pothan* and *Radhika*. While some insist that it was *Radhika* who was responsible for the split, others say that *Pratap* was too easy-going. Meanwhile, *Radhika* says, she will continue to remain "friends" with *Pratap* but will never again marry, as marriage cramps her lifestyle and makes her feel claustrophobic.

Smita Patil: apple of *Raj Babbar's* eye



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NCCF: A Haven of Corruption

Underhand deals worth lakhs of rupees are ripping apart a premier consumer's cooperative, reports Hardev Singh

No quarter will be given to the corrupt, the lazy, the inefficient

— Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in an address to the nation, broadcast on 12 November 1984

In the case of the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd (NCCF) however, the Prime Minister's writ does not run. This apex body of cooperatives, which was supposed to have taken the consumer movement in the country to great heights, is today bogged down in scandal and controversy. The very ills which the PM swore to work against—corruption, sloth and inefficiency—are the hallmarks of the organisation. And the culprits continue to get away with their misdeeds.

For one thing, the federation is ridden with factions. For another, a number of corrupt officials and their friends have lined their pockets at the expense of the NCCF, some of them through dubious deals involving crores of rupees. The CBI is now investigating at least two such deals. Among the most notorious deals—those which have raised objections both within the NCCF and outside and caused losses amounting to lakhs of rupees for the federation (which is making a meagre profit on paper only)—several draw attention.

- The supply of Rs 33 crores worth of pulses to the Food Corporation of India.
- The sale of 70,000 quintals of gram whole to private parties in Madhya Pradesh.
- The supply of cereals worth Rs 4.5 crores to the Calcutta Police.
- The purchase and sale of subsidised handloom items.
- The export of rice worth Rs 5 crores from Kandla and
- The irregularity in the sale of imported dry fruits.

These deals were entered into at various stages in the last three or four years, and none of them has been settled yet. Those who were

involved in the bungling, with the exception of one officer, are still with the federation. They are there because, according to informed sources, they are being shielded by none other than the president of the federation, R.C. Tiwari.

Tiwari is an ex-MP (he failed to get a ticket in the last Lok Sabha elections) and a former minister in the Madhya Pradesh government. He has been for decades, attached to the consumer cooperatives. Tiwari was elected president on 27 April, 1983. He was nominated to the NCCF by Nafed, where he was a director. The directorship in Nafed was a nomination from the Markfed in Madhya Pradesh. According to the NCCF bylaws, a director on its board holds the post as long as the primary state institution (in this case the M.P. Markfed) does not withdraw it.

Tiwari lost the election to the M.P. Markfed sometime in June last year. But the information regarding the withdrawal of his nomination from Nafed did not reach Delhi till March this year. Even though everybody knew that actually the president was illegally continuing in the post, there

was nothing which NCCF could do. The rules did not allow them to seek information about the status of a nominee. When the letter from Markfed reached Nafed, and was dispatched to NCCF within ten days, reaching the acting managing director, S. Ganesan on 20 March, an order terminating the presidentship of Tiwari was issued. At the same time notice was issued for the election of another president at the next board meeting called on 9 April 1985. Tiwari, of course, was not invited.

But directors who went to attend the meeting were surprised to find Tiwari sitting on the president's chair. Commotion followed. The members wanted to know how a man whose post had been terminated could attend the meeting. At this suggestion, Tiwari showed them an order from the MP High Court dated 8 April which had stayed the operation of the directive terminating his presidentship. The members were surprised. They asked the MD to seek the opinion of the attorney general, K. Parasaran, who said on 14 April that "the order of the court has to operate." He recommended that the fact that Tiwari did not represent Nafed on the board of NCCF from 20 March had to be brought to the attention of the court and suitable variation/modification/vacation of the order had to be sought.

An attorney, V.K. Tankha, was engaged in consultation with the NCCF legal adviser, V.P. Singh Tankha said that he would seek clarification from the High Court by moving an application for vacation of the stay. Later Tiwari would say that this meant going beyond the authority granted by the board because during the meeting no decision had been taken to file a case.

Also, in the agenda of the meeting of the board of directors on 14 June 1985 the legal adviser of NCCF gave the opinion that the stay order with the Jabalpur High Court had been obtained by Mr Tiwari by "mis quoting bylaw 34 (iv) of Nafed by deleting

The financial position of the NCCF in the latest balance sheet has become worse. The federation is supposed to be making a loss of Rs 75 lakhs. At the meeting to finalise accounts, a number of directors raised objections to the balance sheet which they said did not give a true picture of the state of affairs.

INVESTIGATION

first sentence. In the beginning people at NCCI did not feel that Tiwari would one day preside over the web of corruption that NCCF was to become. In fact it was Tiwari who wrote on 21 August 1983 to S V M Tripathi, joint secretary, ministry of civil supplies, that there were complaints against four officers of NCCI and he was getting the matter inquired into. He said that the inquiry would be completed within two months.

Yet more than 20 months have elapsed since that letter was issued and nothing much has come out of the inquiry. No action was taken. In an interview, Mr Tiwari said the letter was sent in 1984. It was actually in 1983 as mentioned above. Those in the know said that Tiwari had struck a deal. The officers written about were R B Singh, regional manager (central), J N Chakravorty, regional manager (east), R S Tall, regional manager (west) and J T

Adhikari, controller of accounts and finance. Here is a list of the allegations against these four officers, as detailed in the president's letter.

R B SINGH

- During the period 1979-80 when he was working as branch manager, Delhi, large scale indiscriminate supplies of HMT watches worth over Rs 80 lakhs were made to a primary store, Pahari Dhruaj. The watches should have been sold to super bazar or wholesale stores for better distribution. The result was that the primary store was selling away such low priced watches to private parties, defeating the entire policy of distribution at fair price to consumers through cooperatives. There was an allegation that Singh was involved in a "wrong deal" in this regard.

- When Singh was branch manager and regional manager at Kanpur, serious complaints were received against him for indiscriminate supply of *janata* dhotis to a store (again Pahari Dhruaj of Delhi). He worked in league with the representatives of the store.

- The Kanpur branch purchased Targor brand mustard oil from Jaipur at Rs 1080 per quintal on 25 April 1982 and 27 April 1982, whereas the market price prevailing then for the oil in Jaipur was ranging between Rs 980 and Rs 1,000 only. Singh did not consult the Jaipur branch for this transaction, which was the normal practice, and the payment was made at Kanpur for the consignment, instead of drawing a *hundi* on the branch.

- As regional manager (central), he was instrumental in making indiscriminate supplies of 2,500 bales of *janata* handloom products worth over Rs 25 lakhs to five primary stores in Delhi from February 1983 to May 1983. This was done in violation of the NCCF policy which stipulates that permission of the concerned registrar should have been obtained for such a direct supply of subsidised cloth. The registrar, Delhi, and the CBI were conducting an inquiry into this, Tiwari told the joint secretary.

J N CHAKRAVORTY

- An amount of Rs 49.55 lakhs is outstanding from the state of West Bengal Cooperative Consumers' Federation as on 30 April 1983. This is mainly on account of supply of *janata* cloth (handloom) to the federation by the Calcutta branch of NCCF. The state federation disputed this balance and stated that it had not placed firm order for these goods. Out of the total amount, Rs 2.77 lakhs worth of goods supplied by the Kanpur branch were reported to be still in transit.



The NCCF head office in New Delhi

INVESTIGATION

• An amount of Rs 24.19 lakhs is outstanding from Manipuri wholesale stores to the Calcutta NCCF branch as on 30 April 1983. The transport documents of edible oil are lying with the branch but the goods have already been delivered to a private party to be transferred to Imphal. NCCF is heavily losing interest on this. The regional manager was careless in this transaction.

• Chakravorty, without getting the approval of the head office, entered into an agreement with the Calcutta police store for supply of groceries to be purchased from a particular party at a fixed rate. The agreement provided for no tenders for fixing up the supplier. The result was that the regional manager had assisted a private party against the interest of NCCF consumer stores (who were earlier supplying the groceries) and the members of the stores.

• Non-controlled textiles worth Rs 1.91 crores were supplied to various cooperative societies in the eastern region in 1982-83 but this amount had not gone into the cash book of these societies. The challan number and invoice number do not contain the GTR number and the mode of transportation. Similarly, confiscated goods worth Rs 82 lakhs had been supplied from the Calcutta branch of NCCF to various cooperative societies in the eastern region and the transaction had not been entered in their cash book. The invoices and challan numbers do not contain the GTR number and mode of transportation. Evidently, these goods have been sold to private parties in the name of cooperative societies. This is a serious irregularity which proves the branch's complicity in this clandestine transaction.

R S LALL

• During 1980-81, NCCF had obtained firm orders for export of 45,000 tonnes of rice. But that year only 35,363 tonnes could be shipped from Kandla port. Because NCCF did not have any export quota for the next year, they wrote to the government of India to permit export of the balance quantity. This information that the NCCF had requested for permission was passed on by some one in the Bombay regional office to a private party. The private party then clandestinely exported 11,000 tonnes of rice by 9 March 1982 through Bombay and Kakinada ports in the name of NCCF. If the Bombay officials of NCCF had not collaborated with the private party, the party was in no position to undertake the illegal export of rice. The regional manager and his staff are responsible

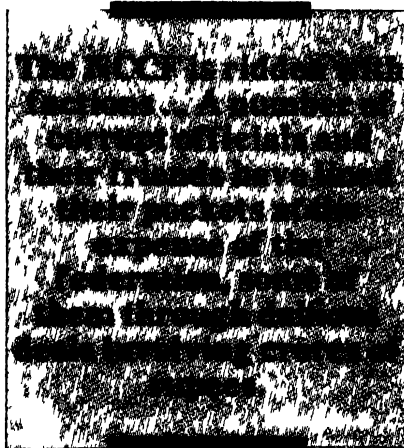
for this serious irregularity which included cheating the NCCF. The CBI has been asked to fix the responsibility.

T T ADHIKARI

• In the case relating to the illegal export of rice, the finance division accepted a cheque for Rs one lakh from the private firm as an advance when NCCF could not entertain such a cheque and permit the party to export rice on behalf of NCCF. This was a great financial irregularity which had not been rectified.

This happened in the year. Tiwari had joined. Slowly with time, he changed his stance. Months later, the promise of his letter to take action against the officer was not borne out by facts. Each of these officers were still with the NCCF.

In fact, there was another serious allegation against R S Lall. This time it came from the controller of exports and imports. Debaring



NCCF from receiving import licences, importation under open general licence and allotment of import goods through canalising agencies for a period of five years till 1988, the deputy chief controller imports and exports (CCI&E) A G V Subbu said that NCCF has indulged in profiteering like private trade by inflating the cost price of imported dry fruits through various expenses and as a result the benefit of holding the price line and passing on the benefit to the consumer had not been achieved.

In his order dated 24 January 1985, Subbu explained that NCCF had been issued an *ad hoc* licence bearing No. P/Z/0321424 for Rs one crore for import of dry fruits excluding cashew nuts and dates with the condition that NCCF would distribute the imported dry fruits in consumer parks to superbarazars at a profit margin of five per cent only.

Dry fruits worth Rs 68.13 lakhs were imported and sold in bulk quantities to cooperative stores in Bombay and Delhi and that too after the Deepawali season of 1982, for which it was imported. Lall, who is the chief manager of imports and exports, NCCF, told the CCI&E during a personal hearing that the decision to sell a large quantity of imported dry fruits was taken at his level and there was no board resolution nor any specific direction from their head office. Lall held that there was not much of a difference between a cooperative store and a superbarazar.

But the deputy CCI&E was not convinced. He pointed out that NCCF had a network of 18 branches all over the country, but the dry fruits went only to Delhi and Bombay. Moreover, there was no reply from Lall as to why these were not distributed in packs of one or two kilograms.

Subbu held that NCCF had violated the condition imposed on the licence, committed a breach of sub-clause 8 of the Imports (Control) Order 1955 and the order that they be debarred for five licensing periods. The NCCF, according to acting managing director S. Ganesan, had gone in for an appeal to the additional CCI&E.

With a somewhat monotonous regularity, irregularities have surfaced at the federation. On 2 August 1984, the member of Parliament Subhas Yadav complained about the 'serious anomalies and discrepancies' in regard to processing of gram whole. He wanted to know why no tender had been floated and urged the NCCF not to finalise matters without having gone through the formalities, but to no avail. Ultimately, the 70,000 quintals were given to private traders in Delhi without proper procedures. This, despite the fact that the NCCF mill at Bhiwani was facing an acute shortage of orders.

In January 1985, the Central Bureau of Investigation was asked to look into the irregularities regarding the purchase of pulses amounting to Rs 13 crore. Moving swiftly, the CBI found enough reason to file a regular case against Yogendra Jha, manager (north) and others, in April this year. In the first information report filed by the SP, CBI, it was stated that there had been an allegation that certain officials of NCCF, in connivance with certain private persons and grain dealers, had caused a huge loss of revenue to the government with a deal on pulses bought at exorbitant rates.

After investigation, the CBI found that by awarding the contract for the

'I don't Want to be Humiliated'

R G Tiwari (67) a former Member of Parliament, has been in the cooperative movement for the past 31 years. He joined the NCCF in 1983 and has been at the centre of controversy since the inception of the organisation. There are two groups arrayed against each other at the federation headquarters, one for him and the other opposed to him. He spoke to SUNDAY among other things, about the controversy over his continuance in the federation as a representative of the Madhya Pradesh Markfed, which he has apparently ceased to be.

Q When did you join NCCF and till when were you a representative of the Madhya Pradesh Markfed?

A I joined the federation in 1983 and till April this year I represented the state Markfed.

Q Apparently, you no longer represent the state federation since you had lost the election to the state unit last year in June.

A According to the bylaws, the earlier representative continues till an alternative or successor is sent to an organisation. The letter electing the successor came in March this year.

Q Why did it take so long for the letter to come to NCCF? There is an allegation that you put pressure on the state Markfed to suppress the letter.

A I don't know why it took so long. I have not put pressure at all. The papers were handed over to Subhas Yadav, the successor, for delivery. So you see he cannot suppress papers of his own interest. I have not spoken a single word about it to either Subhas Yadav or the state Markfed. Even if I had spoken, the government of Madhya Pradesh would not have listened because Arjun Singh (then chief minister) did not look upon me kindly.

Q Wasn't it your moral duty to leave the organisation when you had lost?

A Not at all, because the bylaw says that unless a substitute is there the earlier one continues.

Q What happened after the letter was sent by the MP Markfed in March this year?

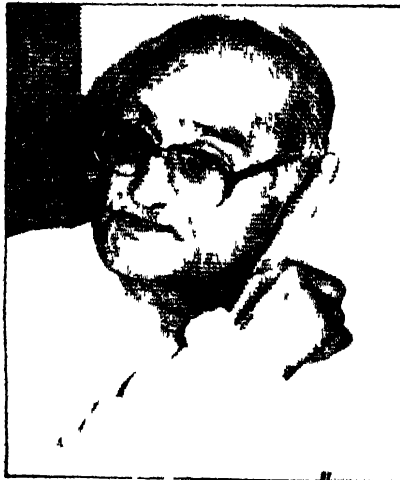
A A copy was given to me. On the basis of that I moved the Jabalpur High Court for a stay. My plea for

moving the court was a decision that all cooperative elections in MP had been held invalid. The court had held that, since the returning officer was the collector, it violated the rules which required only the registrar of cooperatives to be the returning officer.

Q If you are challenging the elections, doesn't that mean that your grounds for continuing as president are not very strong?

A I continue to be the president on the basis of the decision of the earlier general body meeting of the Markfed.

Q In 1983 you had written to the ministry that there were serious allegations against four officers, and that you were getting the charges inquired into. Yet more



R G Tiwari

than 20 months have elapsed and nothing has happened. Why?

A It was not 1983. It was in the latter part of 1984. When the facts were brought to my notice, I immediately ordered an inquiry.

Q You had said that the reports would be ready in a month. What happened?

A Not within one month but within two months I informed the committee that they should complete the inquiry within two months. However, they have not been able to do it. But then, there are a number of inquiries which never get finished on time. I am not a master of these people, they work according to their convenience. Now the committees are expected to file their reports by the end of this month.

Q How is it that in an organisation which makes a profit of only about Rs four lakhs, the president's travelling and daily allowance bill come to more than Rs three lakhs?

A I have not calculated but I can assure you that I have not charged a single paise in violation of the rules. Till now, no one has objected, and it is not as if I go wandering around the country. You see, all these things are being circulated by people like B N Singh and J S Arneja whose services were terminated recently. They were found to be injurious to NCCF. This is all motivated.

Q There is an allegation that these two officers were victimised because they were against you.

A It had come to my notice that the association of these men with the organisation was against the NCCF. Both of them were stated to be against the former president.

Iapeswar Singh and were suspended. Somehow on the intervention of the minister (Bhagwat Jha Azad) they continued.

Q Do you think that with so many charges of corruption and with the CBI looking into two major deals, the NCCF has lived up to its promise?

A Charges are all motivated. Of course there is a lot of scope for improvement both administratively and in business programming.

Q Why is the organisation doing so badly on the financial front?

A The problems started in 1979 when a number of constituents had withheld the dues. At one point these ran to Rs 13 crores. I have been instrumental in getting back a large portion of it.

Q Are you in favour of the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act 1984?

A I cannot comment on it because I have not gone through the act except for the portion dealing with the election of chairman and managing director.

Q Are you going to stand for the forthcoming elections?

A I have practically decided not to stand for the elections.

Q If you did not want to continue, what was the point in going to the court for a stay order?

A I don't want to be humiliated. I don't want to be ousted by illegal means.

INVESTIGATION

supply of pulses to the cartel of thirteen firms of New Delhi, Raipur, Morena, Agra and Lucknow a loss of Rs 22,45,900 had been caused to the government. The CBI, therefore, registered a case under section 120B (conspiracy), read with 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery), and 418 (cheating someone whose interest one is bound to protect) of the Indian Penal Code.

A copy each of the FIR was sent to K C Pandya, secretary, ministry of food and civil supplies and S V M Tripathi, chief vigilance officer, of the ministry. On 12 April 1985. Yet when contacted, the joint secretary, D K Singh, who looks after the cooperatives, admitted their ignorance about the case having being registered. He said that the ministry would take action when it was brought to its notice. An officer of the government is generally put under suspension if a case is registered against them.

The same sort of reply was forthcoming from the acting managing director of NCCF S Ganesan. In May when interviewed he said that no official intimation had either been received from the ministry or the CBI. The new managing director, A K Aggarwal said he was 'too busy'. Another of the actions taken by the president and which raised a few eyebrows was the action against B N Singh, additional managing director and J S Arneja, regional manager (north). B N Singh was reverted to Bihar. Arneja however came in for more serious punishment. In an order dated 23 February 1985, the then managing director, R P Srivastava said that the services of Arneja "are no longer required by the NCCF and his services stand terminated with immediate effect." A cheque amounting to three months' salary was attached.

When contacted, B N Singh said that this was a pure case of victimisation. These officers were not ready to toe the line so they had been thrown out. Arneja said that the termination of his services without so much as a show cause notice was against the principle of natural justice. He was sure that this had been done because they had become a thorn in the side of R G Tiwari.

Smarting from his humiliating dismissal, Arneja has now gone to court with a petition referring to a recent Supreme Court decision in the West Bengal State Electricity Board versus Desh Bandhu Ghosh case where the court had held that firing an employee after giving three months' salary amounted to "vicious discrimination" and was totally arbitrary. It was called a "naked hire and fire" rule. However, according to Tiwari,

(see interview) this course was adopted because their services were thought to be against the interests of the organisation. Arneja, in a letter to the managing director on 25 February, said that he had been asked to leave because of his objections to various deals entered into by NCCF which were 'wrong'.

Apart from the various irregularities the financial condition of the federation is far from sound. In fact, D K Singh, who had been joint secretary in the ministry went into the working of the federation and submitted a report on 8 May 1985 to the central registrar of cooperative societies. His report is a damning indictment of the way the federation works.

In his report Mr Singh has said that NCCF, though it is two decades old, does not seem to have developed a proper administrative and financial culture yet. Purchases are generally done on *ad hoc* decisions, and even heavy purchases involving large

In his report D.K. Singh has said that NCCF, though it is two decades old, does not seem to have developed a proper administrative and financial culture yet.

amounts of money are made by officers of NCCF without observing the "minimum requirements of financial propriety. The entire share capital and reserve, according to Singh, had been almost eroded due to its blockage in claims. The management of NCCF funds was based on raising of loans from banks against heavy interest payments. As there was no internal generation of funds, the liquidity position of the organisation had become really very serious.

Objecting to the high TA and DA bills of officials and directors, the joint secretary in his conclusion has said that the viability of the federation had become "marginal and its financial soundness is at stake. In short the organisation is suffering from serious administrative and financial maladies." In fact the latest balance sheet shows a sorry state of affairs. The accounts for the year ending 30 June 1984 show a loss of Rs 75.12 lakh against a net profit of Rs

8.37 lakh in the previous year. The auditors have commented that the accounts do not show a true state of affairs of the fixed assets, and that on inventories there is no systematic and uniform method of preparation.

The financial position in the latest balance sheet has become worse. The federation is supposed to be making a loss of Rs 75 lakhs. At the meeting to finalise the accounts, a number of directors raised objections to the balance sheet and profit and loss accounts which they said did not give a true picture of the state of affairs.

According to D S Mishra, a director on the NCCF board and the U.P. Upphokta Sahakari Sangh Ltd, said that the much heralded rise in sales by eleven per cent must have been seen in the context of the rise of 50 per cent in stocks. Mishra had wanted to know at the meeting on 6 June 1985 as to what the percentage of increase was in view of the increased prices. At the meeting an additional provision of Rs 45 lakhs was added on account of bad and doubtful debts. A few other changes were also asked to be made and produced for ratification at the annual general meeting on 22 July 1985 when the election to the board would also be held.

Mishra had earlier written to the union minister for civil supplies, drawing his attention to the various malpractices in the federation. He said in his letter that Tiwari and the then managing director Srivastava were running the institution as a "private limited company" and Tiwari continued to "hold the chair by manipulation." Mishra said in an interview that the time had come to draw the attention of everybody to the federations' sorry state. The government and the states have majority shares in NCCF, whose annual report and accounts are placed before Parliament. At the board meeting he noted, a complaint was made of the 'leakage' of news about the affairs of the institution to the press. He said that since "water had gone above one's head," the time had come to protest about what was happening in the federation.

In a bid to bring about a semblance of order in the affairs of the cooperatives, the government last year passed the Multi State Consumers' Cooperative Act which in effect would pare lot of the power enjoyed by the federation. Under the Act, the government would have more say in the election of directors to the board. However, the rules of the Act have just been framed (they are coming into effect on 1 August 1985). It is learnt that some directors of NCCF are getting together to challenge the Act in court.



Swami Devananda with children at a yoga camp

God or Fraud ?

Swami Vishnu Devananda is making money by running fake yoga institutes

Swami Vishnu Devananda, popularly known as the 'Flying Swami', first hit the headlines when he piloted a super light one seater aircraft over the Berlin Wall in what he called a peace mission. Taking off from the British zone of West Berlin on 15 September 1983, the swami flew for half an hour before landing in East Berlin as a symbolic protest against the artificial boundaries that divide mankind. The swami has also flown on other peace missions over trouble spots including showering petals of peace over Amritsar early last year. In December 1984 the swami and his disciples had set off in a double decker on a peace tour from London. Such publicity stunts have failed to create any impact. But for the 58-year-old Kerala-born Swami Vishnu Devananda, who emerged in Canada as an internationally acclaimed yoga guru, such peace missions are a facade behind which he runs a worldwide chain of fake yoga institutes, raking in millions through crash courses. Investigation reveals that a few who go out of these two or three week

camps are satisfied with what they have learnt. People who have attended such camps in the swami's Sivananda Ashram in New York, 25 kms from Iridrum, say that no yoga is taught. And the swami, they say, does not practice what he preaches.

M. N. Joy, an English teacher who attended one of the crash yoga courses lured by the advertisement blitz, said: "What was being taught there was not yoga. The swami with his perfectly decent English, one who has been practising yoga for 40 years to save expenses on food, the swami had prescribed fasting and carrot juice for most of us. The swami felt my ears and concluded that my body was too stiff. He then prescribed *tuliswara* twice a day as the panacea. I had to arrange for food from outside to keep breathing. The yoga instructor, Swami Shantidev, a real practitioner from America, left the camp in a huff after realising it was all a fraud."

And then there was a much publicised computer which was meant to analyse our psychological

problems. It turned out to be a personal computer and when I asked Swami Devananda about this he kept on repeating: "No, it is a computer. What the computer did nobody knows. All that the Flying Swami did was deliver a shallow speech each morning based on articles in American magazines like *Psychology Today*. The so-called yoga expert, who is not supposed to lose his cool, shouted at me for asking inconvenient questions. At night while lying in the bed, the four mattresses were provided, I saw a bottle of Johnny Walker being taken into the swami's room. Whether the bottle contained just plain water, I do not know. The doctor of the camp was a so-called anatomist, an old lady who looked at your eye and diagnosed your problem. Fraud has never been so well packaged."

Such yoga courses are conducted in all Sivananda ashrams owned by the 'Flying Swami' located in idyllic locations in Europe and Canada. A children's yoga camp costs \$400 and a yoga teacher's training course



Disciples of Swami Devananda inside the yoga centre in Quebec, Canada

costs \$600. A two week stress management yoga intensive course costs \$280. The Flying Swami knows how to extract his price.

Ever the eternal showman, the Flying Swami indulged in another publicity stunt in Trivandrum early this year. He announced that he would instal a statue of Agastya

Muni in the Agastya mountain in the southern tip of the western ghats. A day's trek through thick forest from the Neyyar Dam area where his ashram is located. The statue of Agastya Muni (saint) supposed to be the founder of the Tamil language was stolen in 1983. There is mention of Agastya in the Tamil

Sangam literature. Swami Vishnu Devananda saw this second highest mountain as fertile ground for self aggrandisement.

The swami and his entourage went up the mountain. The yogic swami could not of course stand the strain of the hazardous climb and was carried on a palanquin. While some workers were engaged in fixing the new statue of Agastya Muni, the Flying Swami and two of his foreign female friends retreated to a tent nearby. Some of the regular forest goers got suspicious when they noticed a beautiful foreign tent in the thick of the forest. Inside was the Flying Swami fornicating. The swami whose activities were always suspect, was then beaten up rather brutally by the natives. A case of assault has been registered with the Neyyar Dam police by the swami.

The statue which the Flying Swami put up in the Agastya mountains has since been removed by the forest department authorities. After he was beaten up the swami left for Canada, and as the secretary of the ashram informed us he was not scheduled to visit the ashram until next year.

Meanwhile, yoga courses are being widely advertised, most of them lasting just two weeks. As a ruse to attract the gullible public to the yoga courses, the ashram advertised in the *Indian Express* in February this year that a UFO had been sighted hovering above the ashram.



A devotee practises yoga in one of the camps

Binoo John, Trivandrum

INDUSTRIAL UNITS

Is Karnataka Getting a Raw Deal?

CM Ramakrishna Hegde condemns move by the centre

Four general elections three Prime Ministers and 14 years after the foundation stone of the Vijayanagar steel plant was laid by the late Indira Gandhi the 3.5 million tonne plant proposed to have been set up in the iron ore rich Hospet region of Karnataka is yet to take off. The Vijayanagar problem continues to be a sore point in the relations between the centre and the state, especially after the Janata government came to power in Karnataka. But since then, many more projects have joined the ill-starred list. The latest such project is the proposed Mangalore oil refinery. Last month, when the chairman of the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation announced at a press conference in Madras that the Rs 1,200 crore project was being shelved for lack of funds, it set off a wave of protests about the 'ill-treatment of Karnataka' by the centre. With two different parties ruling at the centre and the state, the row has a political bent to it.

The announcement by the chairman of the HPC immediately caused chief minister, Ramakrishna Hegde to write to the Prime Minister about the matter. Hegde did not mince words. Beginning his letter saying 'We are deeply disturbed about the unjustified shelving of many projects by the centre in Karnataka. There have been a series of such instances and this is definitely building up resentment in the state,' he went on to warn that 'it is this kind of feeling of being discriminated against and a sense of injustice that will breed

regionalism.' He also complained that the decision to shelve such projects was not taken on a scientific basis, but for purely political reasons.

Hegde's tirade, accompanied by a chorus of protests by prominent people in the state, was followed by a routine statement from the centre. The Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, assured Hegde when the latter met him in New Delhi that the project would not be shelved. The union minister of state for finance, Janardhan Poojary, and the parliamentary secretary, Oscar Fernandes, both of whom come from Mangalore, also said that the project would not be dropped. Said Poojary, 'As long as I am in the ministry, I will not allow the project to be shelved.'

The Mangalore oil refinery comes at the tailend of the list of projects that have been earmarked for the state, but have been totally shelved, shifted to other states or denied funds. In quite a few cases, the reason for the change is political expediency. For instance, the ministry of communications had decided to set up a digital electronic switch equipment factory in Bangalore. After the state government had committed itself to provide land, water and power, a decision was taken to shift the project to Gonda in Uttar Pradesh against the recommendation of the ministry. Similarly, the Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company had applied for setting up a unit for manufacture of commercial vehicles at Dharwad in north Karna-

taka. Just when it seemed that the project was about to be given a go-ahead, TELCO was asked to set up their unit in Uttar Pradesh.

Incensed at such arbitrary decisions, the chief minister and his cabinet colleagues have begun to whip up public feelings. A meeting of the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry has decided to take an all-party, all-profession delegation to persuade the centre not to drop the project. The chief minister himself has convened a meeting of all the state MPs to discuss the centre's 'discriminatory attitude' towards Karnataka.

The centre's volte face has put the Congress(I) leaders in a fix. The indecision over the Vijayanagar steel plant has provided the Janata Party leaders a stick to beat the Congress(I) with. Now, with the uproar over the Mangalore oil refinery, the Janata Party has another issue to clamour about. Meanwhile, in between assurances that they would fight for the two major projects, Congress(I) leaders launched a counter campaign about how much the centre had done for Karnataka. The union minister for chemicals and fertilisers, Veerendra Patil, pointed out that the state had been sanctioned a naval base and a nuclear plant, both in the coastal district of Karwar. But that has hardly offset public resentment.

Relations between the Janata government in the state and the centre have never been too good, but it now appears to have hit rock bottom. Soon after it came to power in 1983, the Janata Party had irked the centre by organising seminars on the restructuring of centre-state relations and the role of Governors. The centre on its part has sat over several bills sent by the state for assent, including the Zilla Parishad Bill that will enable the Janata Party to establish a stronghold in the villages.

While Hegde has castigated the centre for treating states like beggars and squandering money, the Prime Minister has himself remarked that the centre could not do anything about the power crisis in Karnataka since 'an opposition party had come to power in the state.' Now, with the centre's decision to do away with overdraft facilities for states, further acrimony is likely.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

Ramakrishna Hegde, angry



ANDHRA PRADESH

Crossing Swords

N.T. Rama Rao wants Governor's post abolished

The Governor of Andhra Pradesh Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma has not taken kindly to the state government's recommendation that the Governor's post be abolished. Relations between chief minister N.T. Rama Rao and Dr Sharma had chilled after the Governor had refused to repromulgate ordinances of the Rama Rao caretaker government just before the Assembly elections. The relationship soured even further recently, particularly after the chief minister's recommendation that the Governor's post be abolished.

One of the main points emphasised by N.T. Rama Rao in his memorandum to the Sarkaria Commission on centre state relations was the abolishing of the Governor's post. It was one of the more strongly worded sections of the memorandum. Drawing on his experiences in Andhra Pradesh politics when his government was dismissed by the then state Governor Ram Lal and N. Bhaskara Rao installed as chief minister, N.T. Rama Rao said that as a result of that incident the office of Governor has forfeited credibility for ever. The state government, he said, was convinced that the Governor had no useful role to play in the working of the Constitution or in the administration of the state. Calling the office of the Governor the last remnant of imperialism and a modified version of the agent of the Viceroy, N.T. Rama Rao said that the most despicable and cruel assault on democracy was inflicted by the Governor of Andhra Pradesh when his cabinet was dismissed just because the Governor suspected that he did not enjoy the support of the majority of the people in the Legislature.

Dr Sharma has allegedly criticised the state government's recommendation to abolish the post of Governor at the Governors' Conference held recently in Delhi. In fact, he proposed that the scope of the activities of the Governor be clearly defined. Later, his secretary issued a press note refuting the comments attributed to Dr Sharma that had appeared in a daily newspaper about his remarks at the Governor's conference in Delhi. Mr Rama Rao also refused to comment on the Governor's reported reaction to the memorandum submitted to the Sarkaria Commission as he has denied the report. But the hostility between



Sharma

Rama Rao

the chief minister and the Governor persists.

Dr Sharma and Mr Rama Rao had initially begun their relationship as Governor and CM on a happy note in the aftermath of NTR's dismissal as CM. Dr Sharma had invited N.T. Rama Rao to form the government after N. Bhaskara Rao could not prove his majority in the Assembly.

But the situation changed dramatically within a few months when Dr Sharma refused to sign ordinances after the state Assembly had been dissolved on the grounds that the caretaker government headed by NTR could not promulgate any ordinance or take any policy decisions. This placed the state government in an embarrassing position. When the ordinance abolishing the posts of *tehsildars* and village officers lapsed, the cabinet contended that it was not a policy decision as the ordinance had been repromulgated five times before.

A recent judgement of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on the role of the Governor as chancellor of the state universities has added to the chief minister's desire to do away with the institution of Governor. The High Court has held that the Governor is not bound to accept the advice of the state cabinet in the appointment of the vice chancellor but the appointment had to be made from the panel of names recommended by the cabinet. However, an interesting question that remains is why and by whom the reported comments of the Governor leaked to the press.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

EDUCATION

Test Case

Bombay university teacher accused of violating rules

On 2 July, the 17 member executive council of the Bombay University invalidated the examination answer papers of one of its own members, the dean of the faculty of arts Prof Hemant Wagh. Prof Wagh had controversially appeared in the examination for a diploma in higher education held in May this year.

Prof Wagh who is the dean of the faculty of arts, is a member of the university senate committee. He also teaches English at the Lala Lajpat Rai College of Commerce and Economics. After wanting to appear for the examination in 1975, he did not take the examination during the next five years when he could do so according to the university rules.

The university had some months ago, advertised for a director of correspondence. The post carries a salary of Rs 3,000 and various other perks. It is believed that Prof Wagh wanted to apply, but did not have the requisite qualifications. When a decision was taken to advertise for the post, the issue was to come up before the executive council meeting. But

Prof Wagh allegedly got the meeting postponed twice and at the third meeting, after he had done much lobbying, the executive council decided to frame new guidelines for the post. A three member committee was formed for the purpose and Prof Wagh was one of the members. According to the original guidelines, a person had to have a BA second class and an MA first class degree as well as ten years of teaching or administrative experience. These restrictions were waived by the three member committee. Sometime later Prof Wagh himself applied for the post. He was also the only one to do so.

Meanwhile in April Prof Wagh decided to appear for the diploma in higher education examination. He gave in his application form a few days before the examination and long after the official last date. According to the rules, if any member of the university body has to appear for any examination he has to take the permission of the vice chancellor. Prof Wagh sought the permission of the vice chancellor (VC) Dr Gore, and the latter apparently signed the form. When some senate members protested, Prof Wagh claimed that he had taken the permission of the VC who later denied having given permission, saying that he had signed hundreds

of forms presuming that the registrar had already gone through them.

According to the executive council, Prof. Wagh is not entitled to appear in the examination because he knew who the examiners were as he himself was one of the selectors for the examinees. Article 54(1) of the Maharashtra Act No 22 of 1974 relating to the university of Bombay says: "A committee shall be constituted every year for each faculty for the purpose of preparing lists of persons for appointments as university examiners and the committee shall consist of: the vice-chancellor ex-officio chairman, the dean of the faculty concerned, two members nominated by the executive council." In this case the dean of faculty concerned is Prof. Wagh; so he knew who the examiners were. Said a senate member, "this automatically disqualifies him, because if we expect the examiners' names to be kept secret

from the students why should Prof. Wagh be made an exception. He should not have sat on the committee since he knew he was appearing. It is definitely a case of misuse of official position where the appointing authority is to be assessed by the appointee."

The ordinance 0.158 maintains that "no candidate shall be permitted to appear for any examination conducted by it, if he does not avail himself of the benefit of the terms kept by him for the examination during the course of five years, i.e., in one of the five consecutive examinations if the examination is held once a year." It further says "provided; however, that the syndicate shall have the power to exempt students from the provisions of the above clause on the merits of each individual case."

Prof. Wagh did not seek the permission of the university for appear-

ing for the examination after such a long break but flouted the rules by appearing for the examination, according to a senate member. He claimed that not even those who framed the university rules had envisaged such a situation and Prof. Wagh has tried to take advantage of the fact that nowhere in the rules does it say that a person who is also the selector of the examinees cannot sit for the same examination.

When the controversy hotted up towards the end of June and there were protests against his appearing for the examination, Prof. Wagh sent a letter to the vice-chancellor withdrawing his application to sit for the examination. Two days later, however, he sent another letter asking the university authorities to cancel the previous letter. But the executive council said that it had no alternative now but to nullify his answer papers.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

INDIAN AIRLINES

Destination Thailand

IA starts operating Calcutta-Bangkok flight

At 10 am on 20 June flight commander Ashok Rahut took off from Dum Dum airport in Calcutta for a new destination. Two hours and ten minutes later, the passengers and crew on the pioneering Indian Airlines flight I.C. 231 were greeted by Thai air hostesses with colourful garlands at Bangkok airport. The first Indian Airlines flight to Thailand was over. On the flight were 42 members of Parliament attached to the ministry of civil aviation and over a dozen journalists including Doordarshan crewmen. The parliamentary delegation led by Mrs Margaret Alva, union minister of

state for parliamentary affairs, was received at the airport by the Indian ambassador Mr Arjun Asrani and the information minister of Thailand Mr Samak.

Regular services to Bangkok by the Indian Airlines (IA) began on 27 June. There are now two flights every week on Thursdays and Saturdays. But IA faces stiff competition from Air India which operates one flight to Bangkok every week and Thai Airways which has three flights every week from Calcutta. According to K. Chadha, the managing director of Indian Airlines, the operation of flights to Bangkok is a part of the

company's expansion scheme. He hoped that by 1990, the number of passengers would go up by 60 per cent and the number of aircraft required by IA would increase to 75 from the present 54. It is believed that Rs 1,000 crores have already been allotted for the purchase of the planes. According to Mr Chadha, the initial flights are likely to have a large number of empty seats but he expects bookings to pick up after a few months. At present, the first class seats will be priced at Rs 2,988 and the economy class seats at Rs 2,131. Though no cuts in plane fares is likely, incentives like concessional tours and seasonal discounts may be given. Capt Chadha added that the Indian Airlines had no intention of cutting into the revenue of either Thai or Air India.

Speaking at a banquet in honour of the inaugural flight and its passengers, Mrs Alva said that Indian Airlines was not competing with Thai (which caters to 70 per cent of the traffic between Calcutta and Bangkok) but that it was a friendly business venture. She claimed that since the number of passengers on this route was showing a steady rise, an Indian Airlines flight from Calcutta to Bangkok would be mutually beneficial. Mr Samak, in his speech at the banquet, pointed out that Thai was planning to purchase a number of Airbus for the route within a few years. He hoped that Indian Airlines would be handling a considerable amount of passenger traffic in the state and appreciated India's efforts to build up better links with Thailand.

Saumitra Banerjee, Bangkok



From left: Arjun Asrani, Capt. Chadha, Mrs Chadha and Margaret Alva

PUNJAB

A Soldier Takes Command

Maj. Gen (Retd.) Sparrow appointed as PCC(I) chief

Prim Minister Rajiv Gandhi ignored both President Zail Singh and former Punjab chief minister Darbara Singh's wishes in the appointment of the new state PCC(I) president. The appointment of Major General (Retired) Rajinder Singh Sparrow for the coveted post of party chief surprised both the Zail Singh and the Darbara Singh factions as, also, the political observers in Punjab.

After the exit of Santokh Singh Randhawa as the Punjab PCC(I) president, it was expected that the party high command would make the best choice. A Punjab watcher said: "The sacking of Randhawa by Rajiv Gandhi was certainly a positive step. The Prime Minister by removing Randhawa, made it clear that no Congress(I) leaders would be allowed to have links with terrorists. But the appointment of Sparrow has come as a big disappointment. 'Sparrow is a typical *fauji* (armyman). Politics is not his cup of tea," said an observer.

Sparrow, a retired general, joined politics in 1967. He was a minister in the united Akali-Congress ministry during Gurnam Singh's government in Punjab. In 1980, the Congress(I) gave him the Jalandhar Lok Sabha ticket in place of former external affairs minister Swaran Singh. He won comfortably. But he failed to make his mark in Parliament.

Sources in the Punjab Congress(I) told SUNDAY: "Sparrow is in politics just by chance. He is first and last a soldier and he, even after entering politics, has remained a soldier." It appears that Sparrow has been rewarded by the Prime Minister for openly supporting the June army action in the Golden Temple as shown on Doordarshan. He has openly criticised Bhindranwale and his men and has said that Operation Blue Star was "something inevitable." As a Sikh, he might have been hurt by the destruction of the Akal Takht and the killing of hundreds of innocent Sikhs in the army action but he did not show his anguish or sorrow. Sparrow does not belong either to the Zail Singh or the Darbara Singh lobby. Secondly, he is a Jat Sikh. Perhaps the Prime Minister thought that his party should have a Jat Sikh as leader to match the Akali leadership in the state, which is dominated by Jats.

The Akalis cannot accept Sparrow as he has justified the "attack on the Darbar Sahib". Quipped the newly appointed secretary general of the Akali Dal (Longowal), Balwant Singh Ramoowalia. "Sparrow should not call himself a Sikh. How can a Sikh justify the destruction of his most sacred place of worship?" Ramoowalia, a former Akali Lok Sabha member during the Janata regime, added: "He does not even understand much politics. I am sure like the past Punjab PCC(I) president, he will also stay on the post for a few months and then go."

However, the Akalis do have a reason to rejoice over the removal of Randhawa as the Punjab PCC(I)



Sparrow in full command?

chief. They were demanding his dismissal ever since allegations about his links with the Sikh extremist Gurinder Singh, who died in police custody in Chandigarh's Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGI) on 10 May, were made both in the press and the political circles.

Gurinder was a notorious Sikh terrorist. He was a proclaimed offender (PO) involved in many criminal cases including those of murder and robbery and was involved in an encounter with the police in Chandigarh on 4 May. The Sikh extremist had killed two policemen before surrendering. While surrendering, he had only two minor injuries on his body. But a few days later when he died in the PGI,

he had multiple injuries all over his body.

It was not the death of the Sikh terrorist in police custody but his alleged links with Randhawa, revealed during the police interrogation, that filled the pages of the Punjab dailies. Both the Chandigarh edition of the *Indian Express* and *The Tribune*, the two most popular English dailies of Northern India, mentioned that the Sikh terrorist was a personal friend of Randhawa's elder brother also known as Gurinder Singh.

Besides the press, the political detractors of the former PCC(I) president, particularly in the ruling party, tried their best to play up the sensitive issue of Randhawa's alleged links with the deceased Sikh terrorist before the party high command. Top ruling party sources told SUNDAY that a number of Punjab Congress(I) leaders had sent representations to the party high command in Delhi giving proof of Randhawa's links with Gurinder Singh. According to police sources in Chandigarh, the Sikh terrorist repeatedly mentioned the names of Randhawa and Gopal Krishan Chatrath, another ruling party leader and a former Punjab MLA from Gurdaspur district, during his interrogation.

Randhawa, a senior minister in the Darbara Singh government, was made the PCC(I) president on 23 March in place of Raghunandan Lal Bhatia, who was elevated to the post of AICC(I) general secretary. Official sources do not rule out totally the involvement of Gurinder in the assassination attempt on Bhatia at his Amritsar residence on 19 April. Said a senior police officer: "Gurinder was a hired criminal. He had committed many murders. He would demand a price for every crime he committed. Though it is still under investigation the allegation that Randhawa was behind the attack on Bhatia can't be completely baseless." But Bhatia has denied the allegation that some of his detractors in the party were involved in an attempt to assassinate him.

On 18 June, after the Prime Minister returned from his fortnight long five-nation tour, Randhawa sought an appointment with him. It was not granted. The message was clear. The same day, Randhawa resigned as the Punjab PCC(I) president. He could not even submit the resignation to the party chief to whom it was addressed. He returned to Chandigarh from Delhi after submitting the resignation to Makhan Lal Fotedar there.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar and Jagmeet Uppal, New Delhi

RAJINDER SETHIA CASE

Tihar's Privileged Prisoner*Sethia flies to Calcutta to appear before the courts*

Rajinder Sethia always believed in travelling in style. The 37 year old multi millionaire expatriate Indian travelled in a private Boeing 707 worth 35 million dollars on which he had spent an extra 600,000 dollars for installing a sauna, a jacuzzi and golden taps. But that was before 18 February 1985, when Sethia's fortunes nosedived and his business empire went bankrupt. On 1 March 1985 he was arrested and jailed in New Delhi only a day before he had planned to escape from the capital with forged documents. Recently, Sethia succeeded in obtaining from the chief metropolitan magistrate, Subhash Wason permission to fly from Delhi to Calcutta every fortnight to face trial for the forged passport case (No RC 285). He was also granted special permission to pay for the air travel of four Delhi Armed Police (DAP) guards who would accompany him to Calcutta—the trips costing him more than Rs 20,000 every month. Even in captivity, Sethia clings on to his once legendary lifestyle—a whole sky above the hundreds of handcuffed prisoners.

What has happened to Rajinder Sethia since the time he was declared the world's biggest bankrupt by the London High Court? (Sethia's personal debts of 170 million pound sterling have eclipsed the earlier Guinness record established by an American, William Stern who had debts amounting to 143 million pounds sterling. Even after February 1985, Sethia, despite being declared a fugitive criminal and having warrants of arrest from Interpol and Scotland Yard, attempted to set straight his dubious financial transactions. In an interview to a British journalist which he gave at his Spanish hideout, he declared that he would be back "Next time I shall build a business so big, that it cannot go bust." He travelled several times to Delhi and Calcutta and conferred with senior officials in the finance ministry and other banking officials in an attempt to cover up his scandalous business transactions. Sleuths of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), however, caught up with Sethia and on 1 March, arrested him.

At the time of his arrest, Sethia was confident that the CBI would not be able to press charges against him

He was proved wrong the following day when the CBI recovered from his hotel suite a forged passport (No W 900509) in the name of Raj Kumar Dugar. Also recovered was a Swissair ticket valid for Calcutta Delhi Bombay Cairo Geneva New York and back as well as traveller's cheques worth 500 dollars. The CBI first charged Sethia with the possession of a forged passport to pin him down in India before further documentary evidence could be collected and placed against him in the courts. After Sethia's application was rejected by the metropolitan magis-

**Sethia high flying**

trate, K C Lohia, Sethia was remanded to judicial custody. A CBI team was sent to London to unearth further documents and records of transactions that Sethia had entered into with the connivance of officials at the branches of three Indian banks in London—the Punjab National Bank, the Central Bank of India and the Union Bank. The second arrest in the case was made on 16 March, when Amarjit Singh, general manager of the London branch of the Punjab National Bank was arrested from his New Delhi residence. It was Amarjit Singh who had recklessly given heavy loans to Esal Commodities

disregarding all banking norms. Also recovered from the residence of Amarjit Singh were photographs of Rajinder Sethia, Amarjit Singh and S L Baluja, former chairman of Punjab National Bank, at London. This piece of evidence clearly revealed the nexus between the bank officials and Rajinder Sethia in the Esal banking scandal.

Now the CBI wanted the details of Sethia's banking transactions in London, Sudan, Hong Kong and other countries to prove that transactions had been made in contravention of the rules and regulations of the banks. The CBI had already received from some of the banks in New Delhi, details of transactions of Esal Com commodities, but it was not sufficient to indict Sethia. Other records they were told, had been destroyed by Amarjit Singh in the meantime. On 5 March, the British High Commission made a formal request for the extradition of Sethia to London where he was on the wanted fugitive list for nine criminal cases, one of them with the Allied Arab Bank Limited. There was also pressure from the lawyer, whom Sethia had employed to release him on bail as soon as the maximum period of 90 days of judicial custody was over.

The breakthrough for the CBI came 89 days after Sethia's arrest on 29 May when the CBI presented its chargesheet (No 3 1985) against Sethia in the court of the chief metropolitan magistrate. In the chargesheet, the CBI have provided details of one criminal case against Sethia and Amarjit Singh. The transaction was disclosed by Sethia himself while he was being interrogated. Sethia confessed that he and Amarjit Singh had submitted false and forged bills worth 10.4 million dollars drawn on an in-house company in Hong Kong. The CBI discovered that Sethia had submitted four bills dated 5 December 1983, each valued over two million dollars to the Punjab National Bank on 7 December 1983 knowing that all documents submitted with the bills were false and forged purporting to show the shipments of granulated sugar to Nigeria. The documents were supported by false shipping documents and no sugar as was shown in the documents of shipping supporting bills of exchange, was ever shipped in the vessel *Golden Venture*. The bills (Nos Com/Sug/0299, Com/Sug/0300, Com/Sug/0299 and Com/Sug/0302) were drawn on the Anglobe Trading Limited, Hongkong, a concern of the Esal Commodities Limited. For this transaction, Amarjit Singh allowed an advance of 7,600 dollars in spite of the fact that an amount of 33,261,831

dollars was outstanding against Esal Commodities. Apart from this loan, another loan of 2.5 million dollars was also allowed to Esal Commodities. The total of the two advances amounting to 10 million dollars was credited into the Esal Commodity account (No 5006-31), due to which the outstanding dues were reduced to 23,258,591 dollars. The transactions entered into by Esal Commodities was found to be bogus since particulars of the shipment were not entered into the import bill book of Esal Commodities, which confirmed the forged nature of all four bills of exchange dated 5 December 1984

With the first serious criminal charge against Sethia already before the courts, the lid of the multi-million Esal fraud had been blown. Rajinder Sethia will now have to face the verdict of Indian courts for charges of forgery and criminal conspiracy before he can be extradited to Great Britain. The CBI is waiting for further evidence and documents against Sethia from Scotland Yard and the London branch of Interpol who will be issuing fresh charges against him. It is expected that more arrests will take place as other transactions in the fraud are exposed.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

ASIAD REPORT

Unanswered Questions

The cost of holding the games has not been revealed

Despite the release of the long awaited official report of the ninth Asian Games, a number of crucial questions about the sports extravaganza remain unanswered. Obviously, the authorities have kept silent about some of the disturbing aspects of the 1982 Asiad and highlighted only the gargantuan task of organising the New Delhi games in a record period of 22 months. The 1,211-page three-volume report was released by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in late June, nearly three years after the event—an inexplic-

able delay. Though impressive and well-printed, the three volumes priced approximately at Rs 1,500 per set serve a limited purpose. The report reveals the difficulties faced by the Special Organising Committee in managing the games and it also offers guidelines to other national organising committees.

It is clear that the actual cost of hosting the games may never be declared. Nowhere does the detailed account mention the expenditure incurred for the games which the government has been pressurised to re-

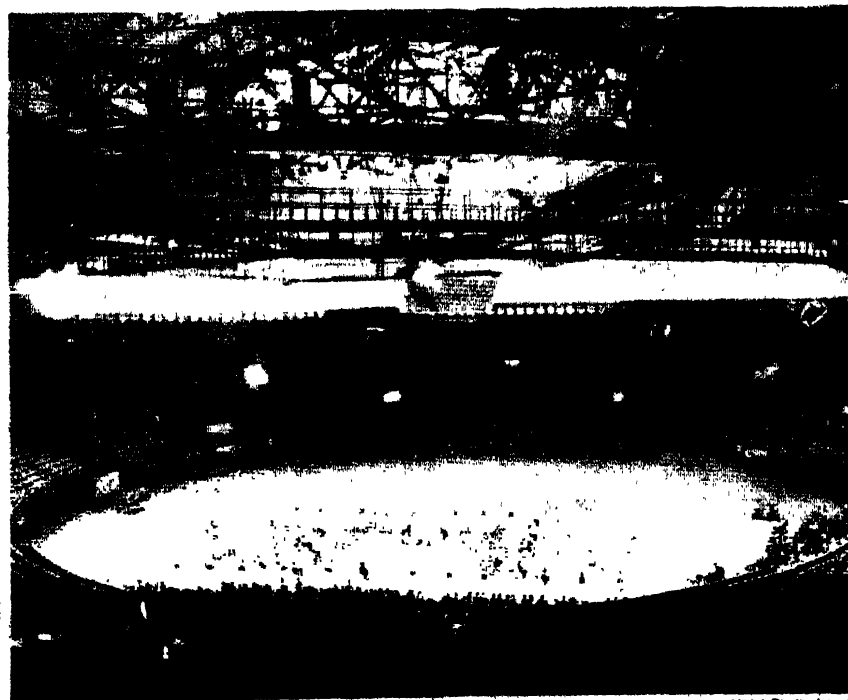
veal on several occasions. The chairman of the Special Organising Committee (SOC), Buta Singh, has said in Parliament that the games have cost the national exchequer Rs 78 crores. But according to unofficial sources, the Asiad may well have cost the country over Rs 400 crores. The figures, quoted by the government are unconvincing, if all the construction and development expenditure is taken into account. The Indraprastha Indoor Stadium, for instance, will be turned over to the Sports Authority of India by the Delhi Development Authority for a price of Rs 40 crores. How could then the Asiad Project have cost just Rs 78 crores?

These are questions that should have been answered by the project. The president of the Indian Olympic Association, V.C. Shukla agreed: "If the report has not given a balance-sheet of the games, then an important aspect of the report has been ignored." Besides, since the report provides details of the construction of 17 sports venues and 3,500 new hotel rooms, it would have been necessary to add how the new facilities are being utilised now. Instead, there is a rambling description of how the stadia were constructed and the task which led to an increase in the nation's prestige was accomplished.

It is the established tradition of the Asian Games Federation to publish an account of the organisational and infrastructural details of hosting the Asian Games. Some sections in the New Delhi report make it appear that the SOC has included in it, its bid of hosting the 1992 Olympics. Details of the Asian Games Federation Council meeting which took place in New Delhi in November 1981 and the 87th session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in New Delhi in March 1983 are mentioned. There are also dozens of profusely illustrated pages devoted to the tourist spots and places of worship, which are not mentioned in the official report.

A number of glaring errors have crept into the report. While pages and pages of illustrations have no captions, many important personalities who were associated with the games have not been mentioned. The number of elephants brought in from Trichur for the opening ceremony of the ninth Asian Games changes from 22 to 32 in the first volume of the report and two photographs of different personalities have the same caption: Shiekh Fahad Al Sabah, the first president of the Olympic Council of Asia.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi



The Indraprastha Indoor Stadium

Nishi Bhattacharya

BIHAR

Attempt to Kill Newsman

Allegations against Ranchi university officials

Deonandan, a reporter of the *Ranchi Express*, a local Hindi news paper, was returning home late at night on 22 June. His moped was stopped by a group of men just 500 yards from his office in Upper Bazaar, Ranchi's busy business district. "Tumse bahut baat karna hai (We have a lot to tell you)" one of them said. The reporter ignored them and was about to ride away when he was dragged down and stabbed from the back, injuring his lungs and liver. As he fell down one of the assailants opened fire but the bullet narrowly missed Deonandan.

The sound of the gun shot added to further confusion. The shopkeepers in the bazaar area were pulling down their shutters and were about to go home and the few onlookers who had gathered, fled in panic. The miscreants, afraid of being caught, also ran away.

In his brief statement to the police, Deonandan gave an account of the proceedings and claimed to have recognised one of his assailants. He said that he had seen this man in the company of Vidya Sagar Yadav, the controller of examinations of Ranchi university. He claimed that he was stabbed because he had written a series of articles against the university, Mr Yadav and his department.

Replying to the charges Mr Yadav

said, 'I am sorry to hear about the incident and there should be a CBI inquiry into it. But it is ridiculous to suggest that I had anything to do with the assault. In fact, Shri Deonandan has himself sworn an affidavit in court in connection with the defamation case I have filed against the newspaper saying that he had not met me or visited my office at any time during the last eight months. So how could he have seen the assailant often in my company? Moreover, a lot of people come to meet me every day. Do I have to know all of them?'

The explanation however is not very convincing. Firstly, it is widely believed that Mr Yadav moves around with local toughs. Moreover, Mr Yadav has also been fighting a bitter 'war of words' with the newspaper. While the *Ranchi Express* has severely criticised the workings of the examination department, Mr Yadav has claimed that Mr Deonandan has launched a vendetta because his brother, an employee of the examination department, was transferred and also because his request to grant him and his wife grace marks was turned down by the university.

The vice chancellor of the university, Dr Vishwanath Prasad, also levelled the same charges at a press conference and later claimed that Shri Deonandan had personally approached him for the favour. He added that the university stopped advertising in the *Ranchi Express*, which has complained to the Press Council of India. Even though there is still no conclusive clue to establish the motives of the criminals, the police suspect Mr Yadav's involvement in the affair. The regional inspector general of police, Lalit Vijay Singh, and the director general of police, Bihar, Mr Jagadanand, refused to say anything definite except that the stabbing was the result of a deep rooted conspiracy.

Harishankar Gandhi, a "lecturer" against whom a warrant of arrest was issued, later surrendered before the court. Mr Gandhi said that he was a lecturer but it is believed that the Ranchi university has gone out of its way to provide him with an alibi. Gandhi flaunted a letter mentioning

his appointment for the position of examiner at the Dhanbad centralised evaluation centre, and claimed that he was in Dhanbad the day Deonandan was stabbed. The date mentioned in the letter is 21 June, the day before Deonandan was stabbed.

According to a highly placed police official, Deonandan had recognised the assailants but had not given their names in the initial FIR out of fear. He said, this implied that somebody in the Ranchi university gave Gandhi a backdated appointment letter and provided him with an alibi. Moreover, considering Gandhi's experience



Vidya Sagar Yadav, accused

and that too in an educational institution (Gautamdhara College), which the police claim exists merely on paper, there seems to have been no justification for appointing him as an examiner in such haste and by bending the rules. Police officials warn that though it may not be easy to find the culprits, they are confident that the assailants have links with some university officials.

According to another theory, Deonandan was attacked by a notorious gang of criminals, who were extorting *haftas* from the businessmen in the area. Supporters of this theory claim that a businessman complained to Deonandan who persuaded senior police officers to spring a trap. It is believed that a policeman with underworld links, may have informed the gang of Deonandan's involvement.

Uttam Sengupta, Ranchi



Deonandan, victimised

PARLIAMENT

In Camera or On Camera?

Closed circuit TV monitors to be installed in Parliament

The era of high technology and sophisticated communications will soon be ushered into the Parliament of India. The plea voiced by some parliamentarians for an "open government with an open Parliament" will be won to some extent once the modernisation process with in the tradition-bound Parliament begins. A decision has been taken to install about 110 close circuit television monitors (CCTV) at vantage points inside Parliament house, the Parliament annexe and the reception building. The finance ministry has recently approved the proposals of the general purposes committee of Parliament to install CCTVs for both the Houses at an estimated cost of Rs 25 lakhs and a bulk order has been placed with the Public Sector Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) at Hyderabad. Work by the

central public works department for the installation of the TV monitors has already begun. It is expected that the era of electronics will begin with the CCTVs when the monsoon session starts on 23 July or before the winter session in November.

At the moment the purpose of the CCTV monitors would be restricted to providing information on parliamentary proceedings, debates and meetings. It is expected that this would eventually lead to the broadcast and telecast of parliamentary proceedings.

The question of opening the doors of Parliament to television cameras and microphones has been debated ever since independence. In the past, there has been a strong demand by some members of Parliament to allow the audio visual media. Speaking on the subject, Balram Jakhar,

speaker of the Lok Sabha said "The floor of the house is a living and throbbing institution of the people." But there have been others who have resented the proposal for the use of television inside Parliament saying it would destroy "privacy and serious debate" and might lead speakers to play to the gallery. "The subject of opening the proceedings of the house to TV and radio is a much larger question. A decision will be taken once views on the subject become crystallised," he said. The secretary general of the upper house, Sudarshan Agarwal felt the views of members of the Rajya Sabha on the matter were "mixed and divided." For the moment, the secretariat were concerned with making a success of the close circuit TV programme. After installation of the CCTVs, the results of the division in the houses would be announced on the monitors, and the antiquated system of divisional bells would be done away with. The TVs would inform members about other events in progress in both the houses, in various committee and meeting rooms besides communicating to the members, important parliamentary activities and

DELHI BOMB BLASTS

The Eye-opener

The explosion that rocked the west Delhi colony of Uttam Nagar early on the morning of 6 July, also shattered the belief that terrorist activity in New Delhi was on the wane. After May, when a series of transistor bomb blasts killed 50 persons, the capital has been relatively quiet. Though the blast left the occupants of house number J/58A unscathed, it confirmed intelligence reports that the Sikh residents of the area had been secretly arming themselves with home made bombs and unlicensed weapons. Uttam Nagar was among the worst affected areas during the November riots which broke out in the capital after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The police had earlier suspected that some Sikh residents of the area had gone underground after the arrest of 52 persons in connection with the transistor bomb blasts. A resurgence of terrorist activity is now feared by the Delhi police, especially since a live transistor bomb had been discovered in the Nanglohi area, close to Uttam Nagar.

One of the persons who is suspected to have terrorist links, is Mukhtiar Singh who coincidentally triggered off the explosion. The bomb had been concealed in a hole in the *kuccha* courtyard of the 75 sq yard house. A large number of bricks, wooden planks and iron bars had been placed over the bomb hiding it completely. At 7.30 am Mukhtiar Singh, son in law of the owner of the house, Gaur Singh placed his shoe on an iron rail placed just above the explosive and hammered a nail into the shoe. The bomb immediately burst and a large quantity of bomb-splinters, brick bats and iron bars, which had hidden the explosive flew in all directions. Later experts of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) said that the bomb was made of one and a half kgs of gun powder, picric acid, and sulphur and the repeated hammering on the exact spot where the bomb had been concealed was enough to cause a "firing train" and detonate the bomb hidden six feet below. The crude explosive experts said,

was similar to the ones that had been recovered from the residence of Kartar Singh Narang, a resident of West Patel Nagar after the May transistor blasts.

The accidental blast, which caused panic among citizens of west Delhi was a blessing in disguise for the Delhi police who have intensified their search for terrorists suspected to have gone underground in the wake of large scale arrests in Delhi in May. The source of the blast in Uttam Nagar is being investigated by the police. During interrogation, Mukhtiar Singh, who first claimed to know nothing about the bomb concealed in the courtyard, admitted that sometime ago such a hole had been dug. The police are continuing their investigations and more arrests are likely to take place. According to police officers who reached the spot minutes after the explosion, they are going to launch a crackdown on suspected terrorists in West Delhi and the trans Jamuna colonies.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

flashing important news items on the monitors. A control room is to be set up close to the central hall in Parliament house and it has been suggested that internal announcements on the CCTV's monitors could be made as is the practice in some foreign Parliaments, airports and railway stations.

In spite of the announcement of the CCTV programme, it may be many years before the long established in camera convention of the Indian Parliament can be broken. In August last

year, the films division had sought the permission to make a documentary on parliamentary proceedings. Though permission was initially granted, no filming of the actual proceedings was finally allowed. In 1978, a Lok Sabha member requested the minister of information and broadcasting to introduce direct broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings. The request was turned down.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Trouble in Paradise

Political instability leads to decline in flow of tourists

In a state where tourism is a major source of income, (the government earned over Rs 100 crores in 1981-82) it is not surprising that the authorities are worried that from an all time high of 6.42 lakh annual visitors to Kashmir in 1981-82 the number plummeted to 2.29 lakh in 1983-84. Says Khayem Lata Wakklu, Kashmir's minister of state for tourism, "The government has now decided to take steps to promote Kashmir as a destination. We cannot afford to ignore this inter-related industry which involves most of the state's population."

The reason why tourism in the Valley is badly affected is simple: tourism and terrorism don't mix. The effects of Operation Blue Star, the subsequent hijacking of two Indian Airlines aeroplanes, the riots following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and finally the bomb explosions which rocked northern India have taken their toll. Traffic via Punjab—a state from where a large number of tourists come—is on the decline. Of late, Punjab has been relatively calm but the Valley's troubles are far from over. The people of Gujarat who are avid travellers, face too many problems because of the anti-reservation agitation. The state's politicians too are to blame. The installation of the G.M. Shah ministry in June 1983 meant total curfew for nearly a month, resulting in massive cancellation of tourist transport and hotel bookings during the peak season. Moreover, political rallies can bring a 'shutters down' situation in the state almost instantaneously. Explains Ranjan Bhatnagary of the Oberoi Palace hotel, "We were practically operating on nil occupancy."

To overcome the slump in the industry, the state government has doled out relief to the small houseboat owners, the *shikarawallahs*, the *ponywallahs* and the taxi operators—all of whom are totally dependent on the seven-month tourist season for their livelihood. Now the government has poured over Rs 1.4 crores as relief for them. But this figure is insubstantial considering that on an average, a *ponywallah* owing two mares earns about Rs 4,000 per month in any normal season. While the smaller operators might cover the lean period with the aid from the state, it is the bigger operators who will face problems.

The larger guest house and houseboat owners, as well as the bigger tourist taxi operators and above all the bigger hotels (three star upwards), with their larger overheads and infrastructure, are facing problems. A similar situation was un-

heard of two years ago. It had led to the mushrooming of lodgings all over the Valley with the state actively encouraging entrepreneurs with incentives and low subsidy rates to promote tourism. Abdul Rehman Karnai, a houseboat owner whose family has about ten deluxe houseboats in Srinagar said, "I've just spent over Rs 12 lakhs in building this new houseboat, but I have had to bring down my daily rental charges from Rs 350 to Rs 250 to attract customers. With each houseboat comes a cook, a washer woman, a bearer and a *shikarawallah*, so by the end of the day I am hardly making a profit." While rooms had to be booked months in advance in the larger hotels a few seasons ago, a visitor to Srinagar today, can walk into a five-star hotel and book a room.

However, many attribute the reduction in traffic to the highly exaggerated press reports, which because of Kashmir's special standing earn banner headlines, for even minor problems. Elucidates Rakesh Mathur, general manager of the Centaur Lake View hotel, "Tourism here was not greatly affected by the politics of Punjab. The press is largely to be blamed for blowing the whole scenario out of perspective. If statistics can be examined, I am sure that on any given day there is more violence in Delhi than in the state of Kashmir."

Due to the reduction in traffic, the state is suffering a loss of around Rs 60 to Rs 65 crores per season. Fortunately, the state government has realised this and in order to overcome the layman's fears about visiting the Valley, the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department (JKTD) has launched a virtual media blitz. With a publicity budget of over Rs one

Lodges in Pahalgam—a deserted look



crore (one of the highest in the country) the JKTD has advertised in all the major national dailies and even issued a supplement in Newsweek International at a cost of Rs two lakhs. Video clips, country wide exhibitions, extensive press and publicity campaigns organised by the tourism ministry have begun to yield rewards. The arrival figures for June this year were about 35,000 almost 300 per cent higher than the same period last year. Long term projects, like developing Gulmarg into a complete ski training centre and the establishment of a Rs ten crore Nehru Mountaineering Institute, near Anantnag, are also in the pipeline.

More aggressive marketing strategies, especially among five star hotels, are emerging in the shape of cut-throat package tours. With the occupancy levels falling to 25 to 30 per cent of the total rooms available, it is not surprising that hard-sell tactics are resorted to. Much to the dismay of its rivals, Hotel Corporation of India's (HCI) Centaur in Srinagar, in an unheard of move, offered a mind boggling 'off season discount' during the peak season. At an incredible Rs 275 per head per night, the Centaur which offers its visitors five star services, has brought its tariff structure on par with the three star Broadway hotel. Mathur rationalised: "A 50 per cent

reduction in rates is the usual practice for all hotels during the lean winter months. As far as I am concerned, with tourism being badly affected, there are no off seasons or on seasons. Moreover the Centaur, which has only opened last year has to compete with hotels which have 15 to 30 years marketing experience behind them." Not to be outdone, the Oberoi Palace offered a counter package for this season—a three-night-four day stay available to the tourists at an incredible Rs 1,234. These packages which are supposed to cut costs without cutting corners, have naturally enticed a substantial numbers of tourists. The Centaur is now boasting of a May occupancy rate of over 90 per cent on operational rooms, and though the Oberoi Palace has an occupancy average of only 45.2 per cent, they insist that they have higher room sales. Such trade practices may well explain why the Oberoi Palace is going in for a "deluxe five star" classification.

Though such reports are encouraging, those connected with this industry feel that the government is not providing enough attention to infrastructure like roads, power and amenities that could really consolidate Kashmir's position on the international tourist map. An irate hotel owner remarked, "Thanks to the government there are less tourists and more flies in the state." A master plan to develop Pahalgam has been gathering dust for the past 50 years. Red tapism is also a major handicap. Narendra Singh said: "I have to take the cabinet's permission to build bathrooms in my own hotel." Also illustrative of the government's neglect, has been the fact that the JKTD has not cared to do an accurate study of the revenues earned by the industry or the actual number of tourists who visit the country. Many are labelled tourist even though they come to the valley on business. However, a growing consciousness has egged the present ministry to enlist the services of the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to carry out an accurate statistical survey of the industry. Omar Jaan, director of tourism states emphatically "The Fifth Plan target of a 15,000 bed strength in the private sector alone, will be increased during the Seventh Plan, to over 40,000 beds. With the government both at the central and state level, seriously promoting tourism, there will be nonoccupied beds." It is hoped that a combination of active government support and political stability, will ensure that this promise holds true.

Mekhla Chandra, New Delhi

CITIZENSHIP

An Affair of State

Renu Malhotra's marriage to an American, David Reynolds, was about to turn into a bilateral headache. But luckily, things did not go that far. Her father, an economic adviser at the Indian embassy, changed his mind and allowed their nuptials to take place but in the form of a Hindu ceremony.

The four-day incident began last Friday when Ms Malhotra and Mr Reynolds announced to her parents that they had eloped. Mr P.K. Malhotra flew into a rage and tore up the marriage certificate. Mr Malhotra with his wife pushed their 23-year-old daughter into the bedroom, locked it and threw out their bridegroom. Mr Reynolds is a 26-year-old computer programmer from Kensington in Maryland.

On hearing that his bride might come to harm or be forced to return to India against her will, Mr Reynolds called the police. They, however, refused to enter Malhotra's residence because of his diplomatic immunity, as a member of the Indian embassy. The police, however, advised Reynolds to contact the protocol office at the department of state.

It is not exactly clear as to how the state department resolved the matter. The department has a right to mediate in disputes on behalf of American citizens, especially when the foreign individual involved has a diplomatic visa, not allowing the American any recourse to US courts. But Mr Richard Gookin, associate chief of protocol, explained that the disputes are handled on a case-by-case basis because of the intricacies

of the legal issues surrounding diplomatic immunity. In this case, legal counsel at the department of state said that Mr Malhotra was fully within his rights to eject Mr Reynolds because, his residence is as "inviolable" as the Indian embassy. Also, Mr Malhotra would probably be within his rights to send his daughter back to India. Since she was still living with her parents she was covered by the immunity clause. When contacted, the state department said that the problem was a family affair which should first be handled "internally" before it could step in. If the matter were not resolved and Renu were forced to return to India, the state department could have thought it fit to try and discuss the matter with the Indian embassy officials. But such a move could easily have been interpreted as interference in a cultural arena where protocol does not exist.

"This is my personal matter, and all of us are talking to each other," said Renu, in a telephonic conversation with *The Washington Post*. Fortunately, the dispute never got far enough to entangle the state department. The ever-gracious economic minister at the embassy, Mr S.P. Bagla, Mr Malhotra's boss, spent long hours over the weekend calming the unhappy father and working out a compromise. Mr Malhotra, who is supposed to leave for Delhi for a fresh assignment, has promised a Hindu wedding for his daughter before he leaves, and Mr Reynolds says he is "ecstatic."

Sharon Butler, Washington D.C.



Hindustan Lever Limited

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE

**Abstract of speech delivered by
Dr. A.S. Ganguly,
Chairman,
Hindustan Lever Limited,
at the Annual General Meeting held in Bombay on Tuesday, 18th June, 1985.**

Among the economic priorities of the country is determining the choice of future technologies. Development is no longer leisurely and chronological. The first industrial revolution was fuelled by coal and steam power and the second by chemical and electrical industries. Now change is being catalysed by the microprocessor on the one hand and genetic engineering on the other. These are the frontier areas of development which will usher in the next century.

The choice is not between the two but on what priorities should be given to each one of them so that the country would be optimally served. The Green Revolution was the beginning of agri biotechnology application in its early days in India. The spread of satellite communications, weather forecasting and the extension of the television network over the last three or four years is an indication of the magnitude of manageable change.

India compared to many nations of the South is better equipped to undertake work in these areas which require a science and engineering base. While much is being written and discussed about electronics and telecommunications, the scope and potential of biotechnology in improving agricultural productivity needs to be brought into focus as well. Rapid advances have already taken place in West Europe and the U.S.A. in this field. However, we know that exclusive dependence on imported technology has its own drawbacks since a certain level of national technology competence is necessary for more econo-

mic and acceptable global interaction.

As far as agricultural productivity improvements are concerned, the commendable advances which started in the sixties must continue. These include increase in fertilizer production and the use of new dwarf varieties of seeds, increased irrigation and cropping intensity and specific inputs for dryland and marginal land farming. The quality of agricultural research in universities and the transfer of information from laboratory to land have made phenomenal progress and must be further intensified. This has been matched by the response of farmers in adopting new methods and technologies. Several chemicals which have greatly enhanced field productivity are likely to improve in safety, versatility and effectiveness in the coming years. There are also areas of concern. The production of pulses and oilseeds has remained static, so has milk and fish output. Some of these represent critical deficiencies in the national dietary.

NEW FRONTIERS

For today's address, I have chosen a few areas of the application of science to agriculture. The topic is of interest to the Company and is also a national priority. These frontier areas of science are likely to supplement the stupendous national effort being made to increase agricultural output. It is necessary to reiterate the term 'supplement' because the bedrock of the agricultural economy has been well established by a series of technological and economic measures; we will have to continue to improve their effectiveness and extend them. As satellite communications are unlikely to replace surface mail in India, it would be unwise to expect that the application of new biology will overtake traditional and well-tested methods in agriculture.

There are certain lessons to be learnt here from the West. With the discovery and production of interferon over ten years ago and subsequent discoveries in genetic engineering and monoclonal technology, there grew a belief that traditional techniques of treating human disease would undergo

a radical change. In spite of these explosive developments, progress has been less enchanting in business terms. There is, however, no doubt whatsoever that many of these dreams are likely to be realised before the turn of the century. In the meantime, traditional organic chemical drug therapy continues to make spectacular advances. In the final analysis, it will be an interweaving of the traditional with genetic engineering techniques which will emerge in the battle against major diseases. Similarly in agriculture, it will be a combination of the well-tested with new scientific inputs which will usher in the next era of progress.

Hindustan Lever's history of the application of science and technology in its business is well documented. Following the successful use of chemistry and technology to further traditional areas of business, new vistas are now being explored as part of our agri-business strategy. In this area, the achievements of Unilever research are very impressive indeed. It is this combination of a local science base and access to global developments which places the Company in a unique position for venturing into this area.

Biotechnology research has been in progress in a few laboratories in the country and more is planned, including a very ambitious national programme in collaboration with international agencies. But in order to be in the forefront of the fast developments that are taking place, greater coordination is necessary. I believe that industries dealing in agricultural products have a unique role to play both in the contribution they can make, and for the enormous opportunity they can provide in the longer term.

We recognise that an unassailable and strong agricultural economy is going to be a major factor in ushering in a more prosperous and confident future. Neither industry nor agriculture can thrive in isolation in this scheme of things. Nor will the developments envisaged follow the patterns long established in the well-endowed, sparsely populated and prosperous parts of the world. As in many other

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areas, development will have to match local conditions. In Hindustan Lever we believe that there is now a growing interface between the agro industry and agriculture which provides exciting opportunities for growth.

In the rest of this paper I have dealt with broad issues associated with accelerating the application of frontier areas of science and technology research to agriculture and have cited specific areas of research and application which are important for successful agribusiness development and growth in the Indian context.

PRESENT POSITION

Improvements in agricultural productivity particularly during the century have been science led. Nowhere have the developments been as spectacular as in the USA. The establishment and contribution of the Land Grant Colleges in that country was a consequence of the science pull in agricultural development. After World War II these developments rapidly spread to Western Europe and certain other parts of the world. Advances took place in crop agriculture as well as in animal husbandry and pisciculture. This has created enormous surpluses of agriproducts, milk, fish, animal protein and edible fats.

In India change began after Independence, first through import substitution and then through the Green Revolution. Education in agriculture, extension programmes, high yield development, increasing use of dwarf hybrids, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides and progressive coverage through irrigation all helped in these efforts. In spite of all this, agro productivity is still predominantly monsoon dependent.

As a result of intensive scientific research undertaken in the sixties, the industrial use of non-conventional oils such as ricebran, castor, kusum, morah, sal, neem and karanja increased and released the pressure on edible oils to some extent. However, per capita availability of indigenous edible oils has steadily decreased in spite of several steps taken and imports have continued to increase. In 1984 a seminar was held in Delhi under the auspices of the Hindustan Lever Research Foundation (HLRF) at which eminent agricultural scientists from all over the country discussed the steps

required to overcome this major problem.

An earlier HLRF seminar in 1982 discussed the problems of pulse production in India which has been more or less stagnant for the last decade thus reducing the per capita availability of protein to our largely vegetarian population.

The production of paddy, wheat and sugarcane has increased spectacularly through the application of scientific agriculture and the progress was increase in the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. These have been supplemented by increasing investment in irrigation, storage and distribution facilities. But there are signs of levelling off and decrease in the value of incremental output compared to input costs.

Milk availability has increased modestly through cooperative dairies and government milk schemes in larger towns and cities. The introduction of crossbred cows has had limited success and the buffalo continues to be the main milk animal.

Availability of animal protein, goat and lamb meat has been supplemented by increase in poultry farming. But per capita fish availability is steadily decreasing every year which in turn is reflected in prices increasing much above the general level of inflation.

Thus in spite of many noteworthy achievements, there are several areas of concern as well. I believe that further strengthening of proven technologies and interweaving these with selective application of biotechnology will be the catalyst to improve agricultural productivity in India.

BIOTECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE — A PRIORITY ACTIVITY

I mentioned earlier that there is a lot to be learnt from the experience of new biology in Western Europe and the USA. During the last twenty years there has been a veritable explosion of discoveries comparable only to what happened in particle physics and wave mechanics earlier in the century. The development of the atomic bomb was rapid but peaceful applications of the new physics came much slower. Witness the controversy about nuclear power plants all over the world. Similarly the commercial exploitation of

the new biology has been slow. The noteworthy exception is the development of human insulin by the genetic manipulation of bacteria. As with all major discoveries, we are passing through a phase of greater hopes than results. While it is necessary to take a cautious view of the speed with which the new biology will yield results, there can be no debate that our country has to plunge into it as an act of faith. We cannot afford to miss this unique opportunity to develop competence in a vital field which will soon be a major factor in geo-economics. It is also important to realise that as in any other scientific endeavour, global cooperation will be imperative. In order to participate in these developments of the twenty first century we have to prepare ourselves as partners rather than as supplicants.

As a result of the already high level of agricultural productivity and surpluses in the western world, biological and genetic research will continue to be predominantly devoted to human health in preference to agriculture. Furthermore scientific applications in agriculture are not readily transferable unless there are suitable receiving agencies. Differences in agro climatic conditions and plant types are also important factors.

With our limited resources, the choice of frontier areas of science for application, particularly to agriculture, must be selective. However even within a limited scope, the costs and risks are going to be enormous and an exceptional order of skills required so it is necessary to approach the issue as one having economic pre-eminence in the country's list of priorities. It would be my plea that all scientific and technological activities which lead to increased agricultural productivity should be considered to be of Core Economic Priority, not unlike many other areas where progress came only after such priority was given. In India we have a well established system of signalling economic priorities in the form of policy declarations and notifications. This has happened because major activities are state-funded and especially as the scope of work and its costs would be beyond most university laboratories and many private industries.

Currently, the only activities meant exclusively for agricultural output and recognised as core industries of economic priority are inorganic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. They happen to be included in their own right as inorganic chemicals and heavy organic chemicals. The list now needs to be extended to include hither-

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to unconsidered activities related to agro-productivity which require modern techniques of biology, genetics and biotechnology.

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Biotechnology is sometimes erroneously thought to refer to genetic engineering. While genetic engineering is the specific technique of transferring gene expression through laboratory intervention, biotechnology involves converting discoveries in new biology into industrial and agricultural applications. These include a whole series of disciplines such as biofuels, nitrogen fixation, fermentation, plant hydrocarbons, antibiotics, vaccines, microbial insecticides and biomass production. In India, the National Biotechnology Board has chosen genetic engineering, photosynthesis, tissue culture, enzyme engineering, alcohol fermentation and immunotechnology as areas of immediate interest.

It is, however, important to realise that although the potential is unlimited, the scientific and technological infrastructure required to exploit this vast field is equally formidable. Fermentation and enzyme technology or bio-catalysis have possibly made the greatest advances in industrial terms. This is manifest more in Japan than anywhere else. As a matter of fact, Japan regards biotechnology as the 'last major technological revolution of this century'.

In India we already have a reasonable base to produce fermentation products such as antibiotics and organic acids, and in spite of the resource constraints in the country, the scope is indeed unlimited. For example, the use of enzyme technology to produce a number of high value fine chemicals and developing energy conservation processes has hardly been looked into. There is one particular area in which HLL scientists have achieved considerable success. Oils and fats are the major raw materials of our business. While new avenues for enhancing output continue to be explored, we investigated the question of using genetically modified bacteria to produce edible quality oil and glycerine for industrial use. Economically, such a proposition can only be of interest to a perennially oil-short country like India.

Although the developments are still at an early stage, the results are

encouraging. Scientists in our laboratory have manipulated genes of two edible varieties of yeast to produce a hybrid cell capable of not only producing and accumulating high amounts of fats of the order of 50% of the biomass, but also capable of utilising sugar at high rates and producing fat within 3-4 days. This unique feat has been accomplished by a novel technique of protoplast fusion and gene technology. Our chemical technologists have succeeded in growing this newly engineered species of yeast in pilot fermenters and successfully extracting good quality edible fat from the biomass. Although the investments in industrial scale-up are rather high, our scientists estimate that we could one day produce good quality edible fats from molasses at a cost of Rs 9000 — 10,000 per tonne.

We are also engaged in the production of a number of other chemicals via this route, although progress, by its very pioneering nature, is slow and the high costs of scale-up make it imperative to evolve cost-effective engineering design. The work of selecting and modifying micro-organisms to produce a whole series of highly valuable chemicals economically will become one of the primary foci of biotechnology research and development programmes in this country. This is also true of the development of enzyme technology where a beginning has yet to be made. Our initial forays into this field appear promising but will have to await successful industrial scale-up.

SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS

To us in India, agriculture-related biotechnology is of exceptional importance. This encompasses key areas ranging from bio-insecticides, growth promoters/regulators and photosynthesis improvers to tissue culture, hybrid seeds production, genetic engineering and others including augmentation of edible fats and milk output and fish farming.

India owes its dramatic increase in cereals output to new hybrids such as the cross between Mexican dwarf and the Indian varieties. Indeed hybrid seeds today represent a big business opportunity in the country. The result of the union of two genotypes, hybrids are more efficient than their parents under a variety of agronomic conditions. Developed on systematic lines on a large scale, the spread effect and

economic outcome will be quite significant. India is the first to produce hybrid cotton seeds by the novel 'hand pollination method,' evidence that the country has the capability to successfully forge ahead in this field.

Tissue culture is the tool in the propagation of true progenies of the parent plant with uniform growth and productivity characteristics for each species in a given agro-climatic environment through successive generations. The advantage of the technique in ensuring that commercial crops such as oil palm give the best possible yields is obvious. Unilever has achieved a breakthrough in the clonal propagation of oil palm. Begun 15 years ago, it is a successful commercial reality today. At Hindustan Lever's Laboratories, research is progressing with coconut palm. The tissue culture method, unlike the conventional methods of breeding, leads to obtaining increased genetic variability relatively rapidly. Fusion of cultured plant cells permits the development of unique hybrid plants. The technique could be valuable in achieving a breakthrough in the production of pulses and oilseeds.

Can the cells of cereal plants be genetically so altered that they use atmospheric nitrogen and thus become more productive? Can they be made to yield more with lower use of fertilizer? Can they thrive under conditions of moisture and salinity stress? Scientists are convinced that these will be achieved. Another area is the use of micro-organisms to aid the farmer harvest a better crop. Researchers know that the symbiotic nitrogen fixing bacteria boost yields of pulses and certain oilseed crops. Attempts must be now made to enhance their nitrogen fixing ability severalfold through genetic manipulation and also make them crop- and soil-specific. This is a highly sophisticated scientific field. HLL's scientists have carried out research work and field tests with encouraging results for pulses and oilseeds.

95 per cent of the weight of plants comes not from the soil but from atmospheric carbon dioxide and water. Apart from the genetics of plants, the major criterion determining the dry weight of the plant and the yield of the crops is photosynthesis. Scientists of Hindustan Lever have discovered a mixture of organic compounds which even in one ppm doses increases photosynthesis by 100 per cent or more. They believe that this route of enquiry is not only unravelling many new aspects of plant physiology but may yield other compounds which can be more readily transferred to farm

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practices. Besides photosynthesis improvers, growth promoters/regulators are assuming considerable importance in the U.S.A. and Europe and even in South East Asia. Most of these mimic the natural substances present in plants such as hormones and oxins. Norms for manufacturing and using these unique chemicals are being constantly revised to ensure their overall safety. We must adopt the latest technology in this sphere, the cost of which would be insignificant compared to the benefits to be derived.

Another new field is bio-insecticides which are of bacterial, fungal or viral origin. These and pheromones — insect sex hormones, many of which are synthesized — if adopted will be of considerable benefit to India's agriculture. Our researchers have succeeded in synthesizing certain pheromones and these are being tested.

CONCLUSION

The discoveries in new biology are spectacular. Like the micro-processor and the computer revolution, they hold out enormous promise. Countries around the world are busily engaged in preparing their base to move into the forefront of what has been described as the technology of the next century. After the initial euphoria, there is a sense of cautious optimism. The conversion of laboratory discovery into commercial success has turned out to be more tortuous than anticipated. Nevertheless, progress has been made.

While we gear ourselves to catch up in computers and telecommunications, biotechnology is a new challenge at the starting line. We have the science base to undertake this exciting journey and our need is also great. While I believe that increasing traditional inputs will further improve our already spectacular achievements in agricultural production, the application of biotechnology will be the catalyst for the next leap. Shorter term gains are to be had in areas where progress has been lagging, e.g. oilseeds, pulses and fish farming.

In a resource short country like India, biotechnology has a major contribution to make. This has been demonstrated successfully in Japan. Secondly, while much of global biotechnology will be engaged in tackling problems of human health and disease in the more affluent nations, agricultural productivity will be the prime concern of the developing countries. Even here, once a research base is set up, the fallout could be significant in areas other than agriculture. For example, some useful work has already been done in India on the application of immunobiology in the detection of disease, further applications could be in treating diseases such as hepatitis, leprosy and malaria and even for contraception.

The economic importance of research in new biology cannot be overstated; at the same time, there is the danger of understating the problems associated with it. The National

Biotechnology Board has formulated certain schemes. Private industry has begun exploring opportunities. What is needed is a unified national approach interweaving the plans of the government and private industry into a tapestry of national goals. The tasks are too complex and the stakes too high to attempt any piece-meal approach. Only large goals and efforts are likely to produce results that bring real benefits as well as recognition in the international community in order to enable exchange of ideas and sharing of discoveries. This is how the great technology of the future is likely to evolve. We are ideally placed to ride the crest of this wave into the future. In recognition, this group of technologies must be accorded a place amongst the list of top economic priorities of the country.

Biological research and commercial application is a major strength of Unilever. In Hindustan Lever Limited, work on biochemical and agricultural research has been under way for several years. Some of the first discoveries are now entering the market place. Much more remains to be done. It is the combined strength of Unilever's global reach and HILL's scientific record which gives us the confidence to commit ourselves to the application of biotechnology to agriculture as a part of the Company's long term strategy.

Note: This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting.

The full text of this speech is available in booklet form. Anyone who wishes to have a copy may please write to: Communications Department, Hindustan Lever Ltd, P.O. Box 409, Bombay 400 001.

'A-Major' Guitarist

For Kishore Gurung, 29, the guitar is a medium of finesse and excellence. Unlike other people of his age, he would rather play solo classical music concerts on his guitar than popular songs. Called the "one man orchestra" this Darjeeling born talent is the son of Ambar Gurung, the director of the Royal Nepal Music Academy. He returned from the US after spending two years with the Long Island Orchestra to set the pace for western classical music in Nepal—a task he has accomplished. He has founded the Classical Guitar Society of Nepal leads a group called the New Age Ensemble, which uses the classical guitar (which plays like a piano)



Kishore Gurung

sarod, tabla, electric guitar and saxophone and is also busy writing a book on the guitar, its history, playing technique and accessories.

Crowning Glory

It was a simple decision. They all looked beautiful but the winner looked ravishing as she always does. At a glittering ceremony, Vinita Vasan, 21, a 10th grade student and an employee of the Housing Development Finance Corporation was chosen Miss India and crowned by the chief guest, film star Meenakshi Seshadri from among a host of beauties from Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Bombay. She will now vie for the Miss International title soon after collecting a heap of gifts in India, in an effort to establish a good career. According to the spokeswoman, Mr. India conferred the honour of finding the number one beauty of the



Meenakshi crowns Vinita

the in which preliminary contest would be held. But all any no date call Vinita a winner by default.

The New Ombudsman

The task of suggesting punishment for erring and corrupt senior government officials now rests with Uday Chand Agarwal recently appointed the chief vigilance commissioner. Agarwal recently took over from R P Khanna and will head the one man commission for

three years. In any given year, the vigilance commissioner deals with about 3,000 cases against erring officers earning more than Rs 1,000 a month and officials in public sector and railways. And nationalised bank, drawing more than Rs 1,800 a month. The role of the vigilance commissioner as an independent investigative and advisory body has become increasingly important in view of a large

number of cases reported by it for recommending of penalty and punishment in the past few months.

Arrival of the 1952 EAS cadre will be mainly secretary in the department of posts and telegraph, administrative reform and labour in the cabinet secretariat. He has been advising the government from time to time on the performance of Indian officials posted in various

opportunities abroad. A vigilance commissioner has attempted to contain corruption in service will be the pre-emptive preventive detective and punitive. With morality and honesty on the decline it is impossible to root out corruption from service. We will attempt to eradicate the corruption centres with stringent administrative reforms, he says. One only hopes he succeeds.

New-wave Architect

The architect behind the controversial Hotel Meridian project in New Delhi, Raja Aedri will create architectural history of sorts. Raja is one of the four Indians who has trained with Frank Lloyd Wright, the legendary American architect who inspired Ayn Rand to create the enigmatic Howard Roark in her book *The Fountainhead*.

Raja had worked with him on the 27 floor Hilton

hotel in London, considered the first real skyscraper at that time and the Atrium (a raised lobby) project for the famous Guggenheim Museum in New York. Since then I always wanted to do an Atrium of my own. Raja now recalls. Fulfilment for him would come once the spectacular 200 feet high Meridian Atrium from which a suspended night club hangs is complete.

Aedri presently heads a team of architectural consultants in Bombay. He has been approached by Aitabh

Bachchan, younger brother of Amitabh Bachchan, MP, to design their farmhouse in Mehrauli.

Raja Aedri



Delhi. His other prestigious projects include the office building he is completing for Mahindra and Mahindra in Bombay, which will have a unique glass curtain wall and space frame, the first of its kind in India and a residence project for the Godrej family in Bombay called 'falling waters'. The house has as its central feature an artificial waterfall with water cascading from a height of 20 feet. There are other ambitious projects Raja and his team are working on in India and abroad.

Mysteries of the Moon

Soviet scientists have discovered hydrogen in lunar rock, solving a mystery that had long baffled chemists. Scientists at the Institute of Geochemistry of the Academy of Sciences, Moscow, said the absence of gaseous hydrogen on the moon was puzzling since the element was found throughout the universe, especially on earth. Hydrogen was released when the researchers melted "glassy magma particles" of lunar rock. The scientists said that "the moon is older than the earth and many substances on it have passed through the stages of evolution that those on earth are yet to see."

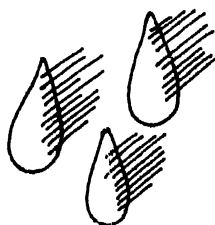


Understanding the Brain

Research in one of the strangest and rarest brain disorders has helped explain one of life's most common experiences: recognising a familiar face. The research also shows that it is possible for the brain to react to people and places by triggering psychosomatic reactions 'from sweaty palms to perhaps even an ulcer with no conscious perception. This evidence comes from a study of prosopagnosics (victims of a brain disorder in which one is unable to recognise faces). Using instruments similar to a lie detector Dr Antonio Damasio, a neuroscientist, tried to detect emotional responses that altered the body in subtle ways without producing a conscious reaction, when the prosopagnosic comes across a familiar face. He used electrodes attached to the hand to measure subtle changes in the skin when the brain sent subconscious messages. Dr Damasio said he found that though the patient could not recognise a face, the electrodes picked up a definite change in skin conductance. He concluded that the brain was carrying out a part of the process of recognising a face, but was blocked at a key stage in the sequence of events.

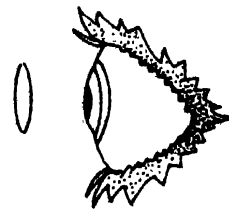
Acid Rain: The Silver Lining

The results of a study by Dr Hans Paerl of the Institute of Marine Science at the University of North Carolina, USA, has revealed that nitrogen-enriched acid rain from power stations and similar sources has improved impoverished areas of waters in bays along the Atlantic coast of the southern states of America. Such fall-out might also enhance the growth of microscopic phytoplankton, the first link in the marine food chain. Samples taken from a number of sites were analysed for soluble nutrients of nitrogen, phosphorus-bearing compound and chlorophyll content. These analyses showed a drop in nitrogen content of the water but a stable level of phosphates, which help in the growth of phytoplankton. The decrease in nitrogen levels coincided with a decrease in acidity of rainfall.



Optic Problems

Despite the progress made in the field of contact lenses, they cannot yet be used by all those who wear spectacles. At a recent international meet of eye specialists in West Germany, it was decided that the contact lens is still not free from complications. The problems of maintenance and cleaning as also the constant feeling of the presence of a foreign object in the eye are irksome for the wearers. Chronic irritation due to the lens could damage the eye. It has also been noticed that the constant use of the lenses for a long period of time can produce changes in the eye. In fact, every 100th wearer of hard lenses and every tenth user of soft lenses had to suffer irreversible damage to the eye.



Phobias of the Young

According to a West German study, the number of adolescents and children suffering from anorexia (loss of appetite) is steadily increasing. The common symptoms of this ailment are the fear of becoming fat and a weight loss of about 25 per cent. In some cases rejection of food also reflects schizophrenic psychoses. At the 34th German Medical Congress at Berlin, doctors and psychiatrists also disclosed a disturbing fact: that ten per cent of anorexia patients die. Yet another disease which is a cause for concern is bulimia (compulsive eating). Excessive eating and subsequent vomiting are characteristic of this illness. A study reveals that this affliction usually lasts for seven years. The emphasis on slimming is considered to be the major cause of this disease.

Mummies Discovered in Chile

Water workers in northern Chile have discovered a collection of mummies 3000 years older than the first mummy of an Egyptian pharaoh. Ninety-six mummies preserved in the hot desert sands for periods ranging from 3,670 to 7,810 years were excavated in the city of Arica. Laboratory dissections of the mummies by Dr Marvin Allison, a pathologist of Arica's University of Tarapaca have shown that the techniques used to preserve the bodies were far more complicated than the embalming practised on ancient Egyptians. He said that the mummies were prepared by skinning the body and emptying the body cavity. Then it was dried on hot coals and stuffed with minerals, feathers and vegetable matter. Sticks were used to reinforce the limbs and sometimes the body. The skin was pulled on again "just like a glove" and sewn up neatly. The dry rigid corpses were decorated with clay masks for the faces and wigs of their own hair.



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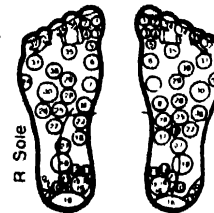
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- | | |
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| 5 Head Nerve | 24 Shoulder |
| 6 Throat | 25 Pancreas |
| 7 Neck | 26 Kidney |
| 8 Thyroid | 27 Stomach |
| 9 Spine | 28 Adrenal |
| 10 Piles | 29 Solar Plexus |
| 11 Prostate | 30 Lungs |
| 12 Uterus | 31 Ear |
| 13 Penis | 32 Energy |
| 14 Ovaries | 33 Nerves & Ears |
| 15 Testes | 34 Cold & Nerves |
| 16 Lower Lumber & Lymph Glands | 35 Eyes |
| 17 Hip | 36 Heart |
| 18 Bladder | 37 Spleen |
| 19 Intestines | 38 Thymus |



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SUNDAY

VARIETY/SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 21 JULY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a favourable week for travel. Students will be successful in their examinations. Friends and relatives will be particularly helpful. The weekend will keep you busy with social engagements. A lucky week for lovers and housewives. However, do not indulge in speculative ventures and curb your extravagant tendencies.
Good dates: 21, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: East



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Financially this is a good week. Professionals are likely to get transferred to a better place. If you are planning to change your job, do so only after consulting elders. Businessmen should be careful while dealing with clients. Do not hesitate to seek favours from influential persons. Love and marriage are ill signified. Your health will also bother you.
Good dates: 23, 25 and 27
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The period is favourable for love and matrimonial alliances. This week is also lucky for sportsmen and commercial artists. However, your economic status will steadily deteriorate. Circumstances may force you to change your career. Those above the age of 40 should take care of their health. Avoid undertaking journeys. Watch out for a pleasant surprise.
Good dates: 22, 24 and 26
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South-east



CANCER (15 July—14 August) The stars foretell a bleak period for you. Businessmen are advised not to undertake risky financial deals. If you have plans to change your career, do so only after consulting your friends and elders. The domestic front will not remain peaceful. You may have to draw on your resources to tide over a financial crisis. Watch your health closely.
Good dates: 25, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



LEO (15 August—14 September) Friends will prove to be very helpful this week, particularly in love affairs. Social engagements will keep you occupied but do not neglect your job. On the domestic front a minor upheaval will disturb you. Financial losses are also indicated. However, those in business will find this period very favourable.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: East



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Your financial prospects are not very bright. Businessmen are advised to be wary of deception. This is not a favourable week for love and marriage negotiations. However, you will be cured of a chronic ailment. Your home front will provide you with the necessary energy to overcome obstacles.
Good dates: 21, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is not a good period for politicians and lawyers. Businessmen should guard against deception. You may lose heavily if you gamble or indulge in speculative ventures. However, this is a favourable week for those employed in the public sector. Creative artists and sportsmen will also benefit from this lucky phase. But do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 24, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is the ideal time to solve legal problems. Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway. Financially, your position will improve this week but avoid extravagance. However, this is not a favourable phase for love and marriage negotiations. Your health will bother you. An unexpected journey is in store for you.
Good dates: 21, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: North-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) An excellent week for professionals and businessmen. The stars shine brightly on the financial front and most of you will be able to repay your debts. If you are in love and intend to get married, this is the opportune time to do so. The domestic front, however, will bother you.
Good dates: 23, 24 and 27
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is not a very favourable week for you. The domestic front will not remain peaceful. Professionals and businessmen are likely to face opposition from their competitors. Some of your friends and relatives may work to deceive you. At office, you may be misunderstood by your colleagues. Guard your health closely and avoid spicy food.
Good dates: 21, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 8
Favourable direction: South-east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Avoid speculative ventures and gambling. Minor tiffs may lead to an estranged relationship with someone close to you. On the financial front, you will incur heavy losses. However, a friendship which will blossom this week can be of immense help to you. Those above the age of 50 should watch their health closely.
Good dates: 22, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South-east



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Executives may face problems at office this week. Businessmen should not start new ventures. The health of your wife may cause anxiety. A change of residence is likely. However, the last two days of the week will be very favourable for professionals. Years of courtship will end in marriage. Avoid arguments with elderly family members.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 26
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-east

For those born between 15 July and 14 August:

Most of you love publicity and you are willing to do anything to attract attention. You are also adventurous and you do not hesitate to undertake challenging assignments. Some of you are also studious and you love to spend your leisure reading. You will prosper in the legal profession. You are passionate and you tend to fall in love very easily. Try and control your emotions at crucial moments.

Women born during this period are usually very fair and they love to socialise.

THIS INDIA



BHILWARA: In the absence of the bridegroom, a minor girl was married to a sword in Bhawanipura of Bhilwara district recently. The girl, belonging to the Meena tribe in Bhawanipura, was to get married to a boy from the neighbouring Dhawala village. As the boy, an army man, could not get leave for the occasion, both parties agreed that the sword would represent the boy—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Farhat Amin, Cuttack)

MADRAS: Students of a suburban city college feel hurt that they were penalised in the recent Madras university examinations for no fault of theirs. The sixth semester B.A. (English literature) students of the DRBCCC Hindu College, Pattabiram, had prepared for questions from Bernard Shaw's play *The Apple Cart* but found to their dismay questions from another play, *Strife* leading to a situation where their "apple cart" was literally "upset." All the 55 students who failed in that paper have represented to the vice-chancellor and the syndicate that they were not informed of the change of the play for the examination—*The Hindu* (T.V. Ravi, Madras)

NEW DELHI: Mr Krishnaswamy Vishwanathan of B-3/39 A, Lawrence Road, Delhi, has been both flattered and baffled by a communication from the faculty of management studies of the university of Delhi. The communication, dated 14 June, with Ref. No FMS Degree 4177, signed by the administrative officer informs him: "I am to inform you that your MBA degree/diploma certificate is held up at the university for want of the enrolment number. Since you graduated from

Delhi university and your graduation degree certificate is not available with us, you are advised to send us a photostat copy of your degree certificate for further necessary action in the matter." Mr Krishnaswamy, who had indeed passed the entrance examination of the two-year MBA course in 1982, actually never pursued the course. Before he could start his MBA studies he got a job in a newspaper and "did not attend the classes even for a single day"—*The Times of India* (B. B. L. Sharma, New Delhi)

DARJEELING: Darjeeling is in the grip of a "ghost menace." For the past few days, empty bottles have been flung from a building on Ladenla Road, adjacent to the General Post Office. The bottles were thrown in the morning, noon and in the evening. Two tourists had to be taken to hospital with head injuries when bottles hit them as they were walking down the busy road. Some more persons had received slight injuries. The house was sealed following complaints. But empty bottles are still being flung like flying saucers on to the road, injuring people. The police and the local residents have not yet been able to solve the mystery—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (B.K. Salwan, 99 APO)

BOMBAY: An old man hawked sweets and toffee for years little knowing that the trunk he lugged around various villages for a decade contained gold and wrist watches that could have made him a rich man. A 55 year old farmer, Hussein Daud Dalvi, a resident of Pangri-Haveli village in Guhagar taluka of Maharashtra's Konkan region, had purchased ten tin trunks several years ago from Chor Bazar in central Bombay. He had discarded all but the one he used for hawking toffee and sweets. Official sources told UNI that last year Dalvi had thrown away the last trunk as junk in the compound of his house. He retrieved it to block a gaping hole in the ceiling of his thatched house. While flattening the trunk in the presence of a carpenter, several gold biscuits and rusty wrist watches hidden in secret cavities of the trunk fell out much to the bewilderment of the hawker. He quickly collected the valuables and hid it in his house. But the carpenter, who had seen it all, informed the police who raided the house and seized the goods which were valued at over Rs three lakh. Dalvi is now spending his days behind bars instead of leading a life of ease and luxury—*Deccan Chronicle* (Khaja Karimuddin, Hyderabad)

WITHOUT COMMENT

A government that works faster—Rajiv Gandhi, on being asked to describe his government

Though the Emergency leadership is no longer with us, the Emergency mentality is still very much alive—A.B. Vajpayee, reacting to Rajiv Gandhi's statement that the Emergency would be imposed if necessary

If he (Rajiv Gandhi) feels it necessary to impose Emergency, we will think it necessary to oppose it—Jyoti Basu

In this world where we are living, men do not have right, rather they have might...we are still living in jungle law—Laldenga, quoted in *The Hindustan Times Sunday magazine*

This (Ronald) Reagan is a mad man, an imbecile...a bum!—Fidel Castro, in reply to Reagan's criticism that Cuba belongs to a "confederation of terrorist states"

It is not my ambition to marry a white woman or swim in a white pool. The central issue is political equality—Nelson Mandela, when asked if he believed that the South African government's decision to relax laws prohibiting interracial marriage was evidence of progress, in *The New York Times*



Had I married earlier I would have been a one-woman man. But I wouldn't condemn a man who bed-hopped—Girish Karnad in *Savvy*

John McEnroe remains for me the No. 1 in the world. I still don't know whether I can beat him—Boris Becker, the new Wimbledon champion, in *The Times of India*

VARIETY

Chess

I am never ashamed to publish drawn games in this column, quite the reverse. Too many fine ideas are concealed from public view simply because a player manages to find an ingenious way to escape from his difficulties.

Three weeks ago this column gave the opening game of the Portisch-Timman match in Helsinki, a thrilling sacrificial encounter which nevertheless ended in a draw. No apologies are offered for the following, the last game of that match, which also ends without a decisive result. The Houdini-like way that Timman escapes from a wretched position shows just how difficult it is to maintain what appears to be a massive advantage in the face of resourceful play.

White: L. Portisch Black: J. Timman

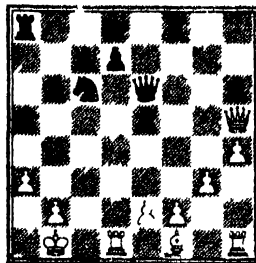
Queen's Indian Defence

1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 P-QB4 P-K3
3 N-KB3 P-QN3 4 N-B3 B-N5
5 B-N5 B-N2 6 Q-B2 P-KR3

This plan works quite well against 6 P-K3 but Timman fails to appreciate the subtle difference of 6 Q-B2. Correct is 6 P-B4 7 B-R4 P-KN4 8 B-N3 N-K5 9 B-K5 P-KB3 10 P-Q5!

The refutation 11 0 PXP 11 PxP BxP 12 0-0-0!

Timman (Black) to move



Portisch (White)

10 PxP 11 PxP BxN +
12 BxB BxP 13 0-0-0 NxB
14 QxN B-B2 15 P-KR4!

White obviously has enormous compensation for his sacrificial pawn. Black's kingside is seriously compromised and he badly lags in development.

15 P-N5 16 N-KB1 17 R4

An awful loss! I have to make out if 13 B-K3 both 14 N-N6 and 15 N-B4 come with tempo.

17 Q-B2

Noticing that the natural 17 P-KN3 Q-K2 18 N-Q3 N-B3 19 N-B4 B-B2 20 B-N2 0-0-0 allows Black to escape the worst, Portisch tries to force the issue, but this quickly rebounds on him.

17 PxN 18 Q-B5 Q-K2!
19 QxB+ K-Q1 20 QxNP R-B1
21 Q-R5 Q-K3!

As if by a miracle, Black emerges with a well centralised well co-ordinated position. Suddenly it is White who is on the defensive.

22 K-N1 N-B3 23 P-QR3
Otherwise N-N5 is most unpleasant.

23 P-QR4 24 P-KN3

DIAGRAM

24 N-N5! 25 PxN PxP
26 B-R3! Q-R7+ 27 K-B2 Q-B5+
28 K-Q2 Q-Q5+ 29 K-B2 Q-B5+
30 K-Q2

The threat against Q7 just saves White. If 30 RxB 31 K-K1!

30 Q-Q5+ Draw agreed

MICHAEL STEAN

Bridge



American visitors if not professional players, are regarded as something of a hazard at my club. If you open 1NT they expect you to hold the earth, and once the bidding has started it is difficult to keep them in check. I had a typical experience (except that it turned out well) on this deal.

Dealer South E-W vulnerable

♠ A 2
♥ Q 10 8 7 6
♦ J 2
♣ A K J 9
♠ K Q 10 7 6 5 4
♥ 3
♦ 9 5 4
♣ 6 4
N
S
E
♠ 3
♥ K 5 4 2
♦ Q 10 8 7 6
♣ 10 3 2
J 9 8
A J 9
A K 3
Q 8 7 5

Sitting South I opened 1NT aware that I was under strength according to my partner's methods. West overcalled with Two Spades and after various gyrations too painful to describe we landed in 6NT.

West led the king of spades. It could not help to hold up because if the king of hearts was wrong I was never going to make the contract. So I won and played two rounds of hearts. West showing out.

But it wasn't fatal. After ace of hearts and three rounds of clubs the position was

♠ 2
♥ Q 8
♦ J 2
♣ 9
♠ 10 7
♥ 9 5 4
♦ —
♣ —
N
S
E
♠ —
♥ K
♦ Q 10 8 7 6
♣ —
J 9
—
A K 3
Q

East was thrown in with ♥ K and I let his diamond run to the jack. Note that it was important to keep a club entry to my own hand, otherwise the queen of diamonds from East is a killing defence.

TERENCE REESE

Quiz

QUESTIONS

- Which state in India has the highest rate of literacy?
- Which infectious disease carried by lice is called "jail fever"?
- With which archaeological discovery are the names of Daya Ram and Rakhal Das Banerjee associated?
- Name the Greek philosopher who lived in a bathtub.
- Bernice, Sarse and Atalanta are operas composed by a famous German. Name him.
- Where in India is the Rashtriya Military Academy?
- What do the following have in common: Devika Rani, Prithviraj Kapoor, Pankaj Mullick, Sohrab Modi and

Naushad?

- Name the French admiral who was defeated by Horatio Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar?
- Chip hole in one duck hook and caddy are all terms used in which sport?
- In Greek mythology name the ferryman who transports the dead across the river Styx to Hades, the underworld?
- What is chirognomy?
- What is the instrument used for measuring the strength of the wind?
- In World War II what was the French resistance to the German occupation between 1940-45 called?

13 The Maquis

12 The anemometer (way)

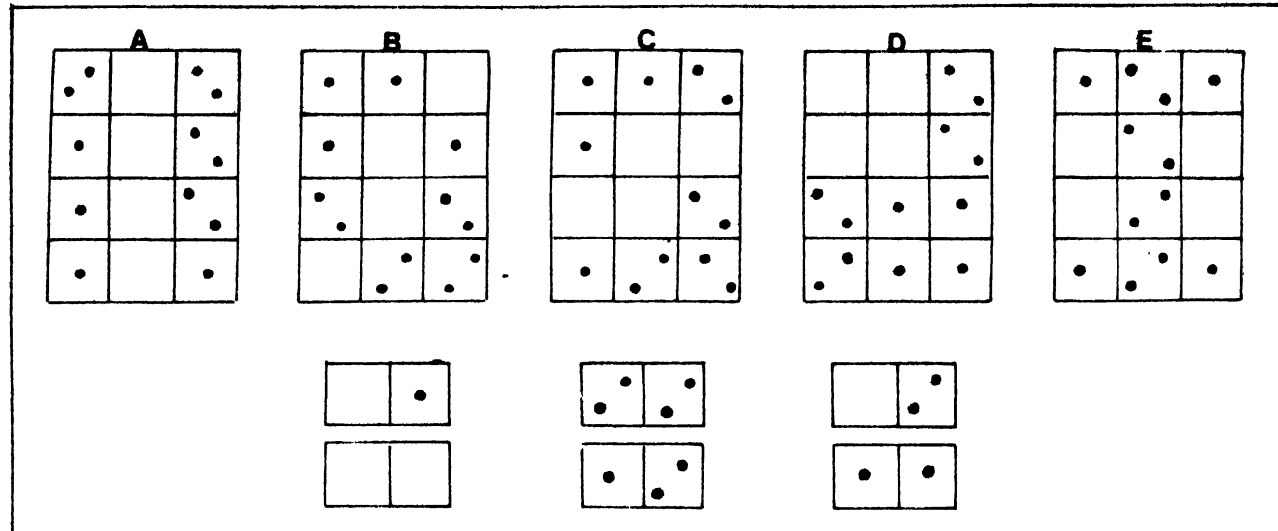
- 11 The attempt to tell the future in the same lines in the hand (Palmistry) is the attempt to read character from
- 10 Chalon
- 9 Golf
- 8 Admiral Pierre de Villeneuve
- 7 They are all recipients of the Dada
- 6 Dharma Dun
- 5 George Frederick Handel
- 4 Diogenes
- 3 The discovery of the Indus Valley civilisation
- 2 Typhus
- 1 Kerala

ANSWERS

TEASERS

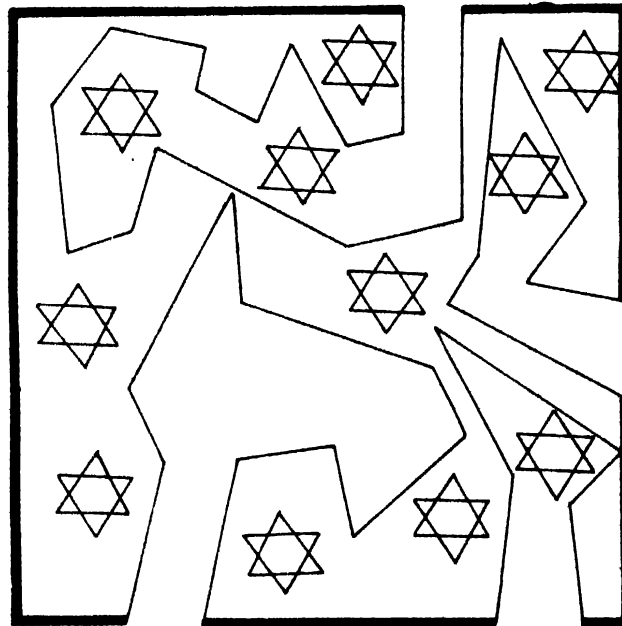
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Odd One Out



All but one of the figures above have been made up by combining the dominoes given below in different ways. Can you spot which one is not?

Quick Look



How sharp are your eyes? Take a quick look and say how many of the stars are inside the square and how many outside?

Quick Think

As you can see the Z is missing from this alphabet. Can you say on which line it should go?
A C D E H I M N O T U
B F G J K L P Q R S V W X Y

Cryptocross

20	13	3	7	3	7	3		11	17	26	22	3
12		17		23		24		7		21		17
12	19	1	10	3		20	10	20	17	12	3	17
3				22		3		10				1
17	3	21	5	2	3	17		2	17	1	26	22
		1				23		3		8		15
5	14	14	26	6	3		14	17	1	20	15	10
18		26		19		23				17		
26	21	1	9	3		3	21	26	22	3	22	3
15				21		7		10				17
26	22	26	2	26	1	7		7	1	22	6	3
10		6		10		5		3		5		32
8	16	3	6	2		4	1	2	3	17	3	15

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	T	E										
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
								N				

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

TEASERS

Witsharpener

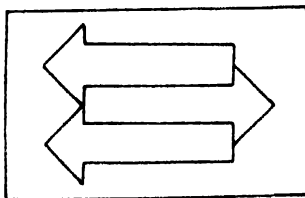
RULERS	207
RUBBERS	218
PENCILS	211
SHARPENERS	?

A school stationery shop was preparing for the new term by checking their stocks. They found that they had all their anticipated needs other than 4 items. They indented for these, and their list based not on counting but on logic (or intuition?) was made up as shown. Working on the same basis can you say how many sharpeners they needed?

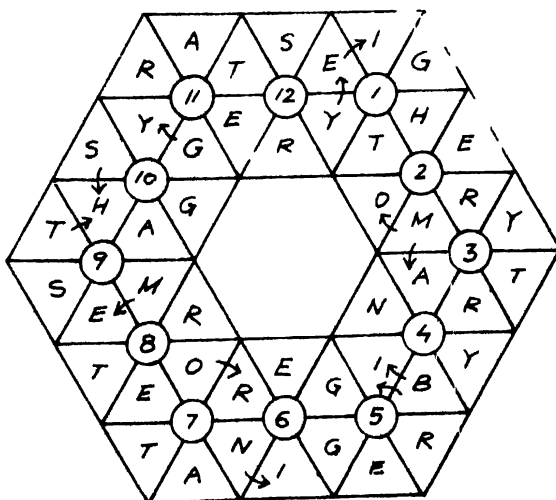
Solutions to last week's Teasers

Quizzbizz 5 cm

Quick Think

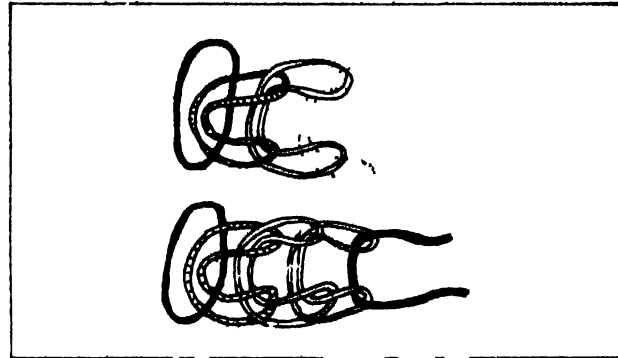


Word Play



Word Power 1 Tan 2 Claret 3 Ochre 4 Orange 5 Red 6 Gray 7 Blue 8 White 9 Violet 10 Green 11 Lilac 12 Rose

Mindbender: Three ordinary rubber bands cannot be tied into a formation like the one shown. Even in the 'eternity chain,' at least one band must be open, as shown in the illustration. Finally, this band must be tied into a knot. In this chain, if any one loop is cut, anywhere down the line, all the other loops will become automatically untied.



Shape Sleuth Total length of wrought iron used 28.29 metres

Wit Sharpener The next palindromic number for the car is 969. But for the digital watch it is two minutes later, 10:01, which is the least time. The most time is 70 minutes apart between 10:01 and 11:11, and then 70 mins later at 12:21. Interestingly, the digital watch forms the palindromic numbers 114 times a day.

A-maze-ing

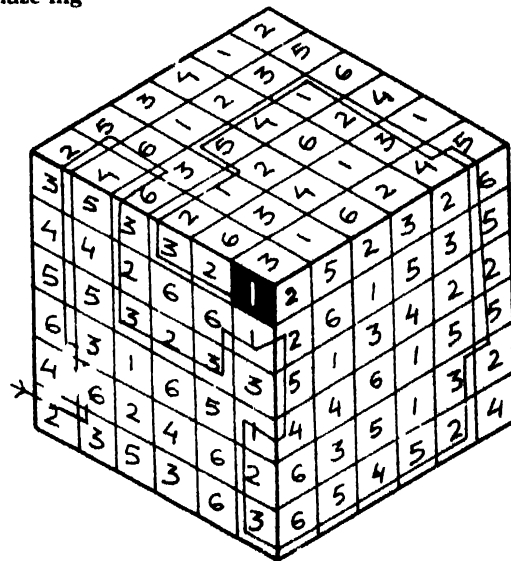


Figure it Out Beginning at the top left corner, clockwise, we can see Neptune, SUNshade, STARfish, SATURN rings, TEASERS from SUNDAY magazine, SUNflower, PLUTO, Indira (means moon), surface of the MOON, SUNNY Gavaskar and his SUNglasses, MERCURY in the thermometer, SHASHI (moon) Kapoor, also a STAR VI NUS flytrap, 5 STAR chocolate, SUNNY side up (fried egg).

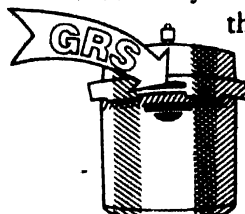
“

Do you really love your wife?
How much you really love your wife has a lot to do with the pressure cooker you will get for her. If you like your wife just a little, just about any pressure cooker will do. Love her a little more? Buy her a better, a little more reliable one.

But if you love her more than you love life itself, get her the

pressure cooker that is the safest. Get her the New Prestige.

Why is New Prestige the safest?

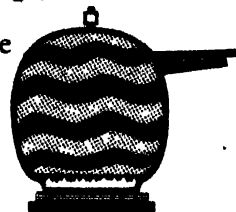


Because only New Prestige has the unique gasket release system (GRS) — a unique safety device built into the lid of the cooker — that makes it 100% safe.

If the weight vent gets clogged, excess steam builds up inside

100% SAFE

and if you have a spurious safety plug, it could prove a risk to the person nearest the cooker. With the New Prestige, the excess steam pushes out the gasket which lets out the steam safely, surely, downwards.



Push in the gasket with a spoon and the pressure cooker is ready for use again.

There is never the slightest worry when it's a New Prestige. That's why it's the safest pressure cooker you can buy. For someone you love.

”

**If you truly love your wife,
how can you refuse to
get her a Prestige!**

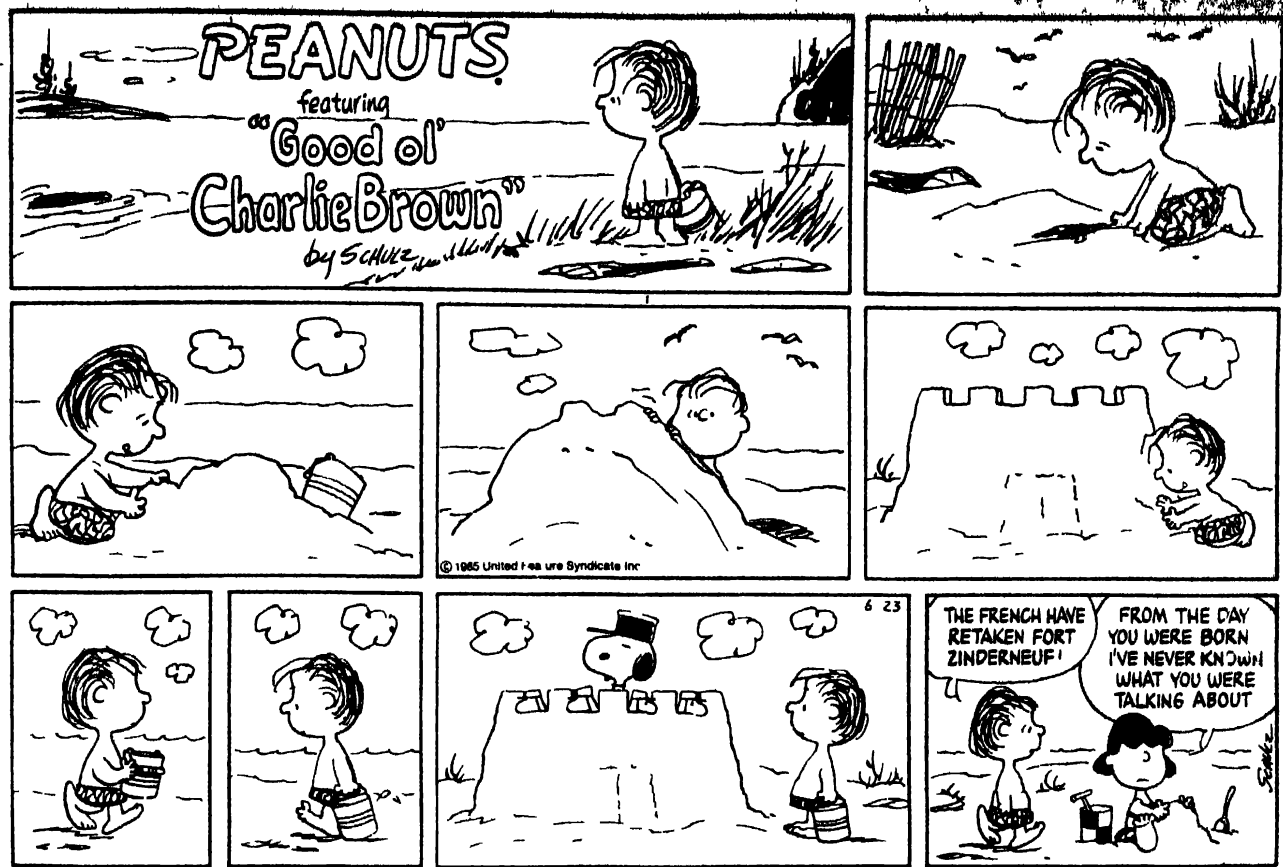


Prestige

A **Waring** Product



Only New Prestige is 100% safe. Only New Prestige has the GRS.



PHILIPS

Maintenance Aids from Philips.

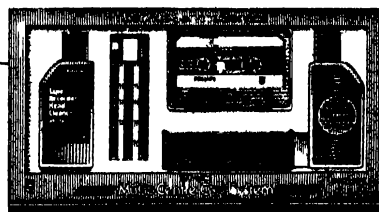
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850/RC



Tape Recorder Head Cleaner
891/THC



Music Centre Care System
877/MCS



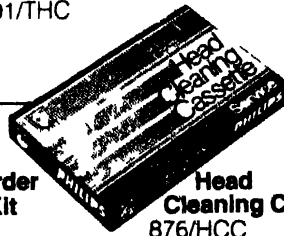
Record Maintenance Kit
850/RMK



Audio-Video Tape Head Cleaner
892/VHC



Tape Recorder Maintenance Kit
876/TMK



Head Cleaning Cassette
876/HCC



Cleaning and Demagnetizing Cassette
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DELHI DIARY

Political Birthday?

The birthday of Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, the former President of India, as listed in the official records is 19 May. The ex-President turned 74 this year. His birthday, however, was celebrated on 24 June. Not only that, the chief guests at the celebrations held at Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh were the President, Giani Zail Singh, the Andhra Pradesh Governor, Shankar Dayal Sharma and the chief minister, N T Rama Rao. The rift between the President and the Prime Minister has been the



President Zail Singh (left) with Neelam Sanjiva Reddy

mainstay of the capital's grapevine for sometime. After the birthday celebration was over, the

past and the present Presidents were closeted for quite a long time. Did Sanjiva Reddy "celebrate" his

birthday on 24 June instead of 19 May only because he wanted his successor to be present?

Conditional Airconditioning

The finance ministry recently received a request from the office of a cabinet minister for the sanction of an airconditioned car. According to prevalent rules ministers are supposed to travel in Ambassador cars. Even the Contessa manufactured by Hindustan Motors is usually not sanctioned by the finance ministry. Therefore understandably the request was turned down. The affected party protested if that was the case, why was another

cabinet minister using an airconditioned car? The finance ministry promptly replied saying that the airconditioned car had been sanctioned for the previous incumbent who was suffering from an eye ailment. Thus an exception had been made. If that was the case, replied the minister who wanted an air conditioner, then how was it that the present incumbent was enjoying this luxury? The finance ministry replied saying that having sanctioned the car to a particular ministry it could not suddenly withdraw the facility. It seems there are not only exceptions to the rules, but exceptional rules as well.

NTR's Shift?



N T Rama Rao

Andhra Pradesh chief minister NTR had greeted the Prime Minister with a bouquet on the latter's return from a successful foreign trip. Politically, not much should be read into this gesture. But in the four visits which NTR has undertaken to the capital since the last Assembly elections, he has not met a single opposition leader. The opposition parties are in a fix. Should they start opposing the NTR government at the state level? The Communist Party of India has already come out openly, criticising as many as 15 decisions taken by NTR. The other parties, notably the BJP, may soon follow suit.

First Journalist

The recent meeting of the Indo US sub-commission on education and culture had a first. Never before had an Indian journalist been included in a delegation of this kind. With the editor of *Mainstream*, Nikhil Chakravarty, in the team to the United States, the foreign office recognised that the fourth estate could play a role in formulating the policy for education and culture. But Mr Chakravarty's suggestion on a vital subject was not received well by the sub-commission. He had suggested that in future all sponsored visits of Indian journalists to the USA be regulated through the sub-commission—in other words he wanted the Indian government to select the journalists. In case of the cultural exchange programme between India and the Soviet Union, this is the practice. The sponsorships from the USA come from various agencies, including private trusts. But apart from the Americans, some members of the Indian delegation too did not take kindly to the journalist's suggestion.

D. E. Nizamuddin



Shivajirao Nilangekar

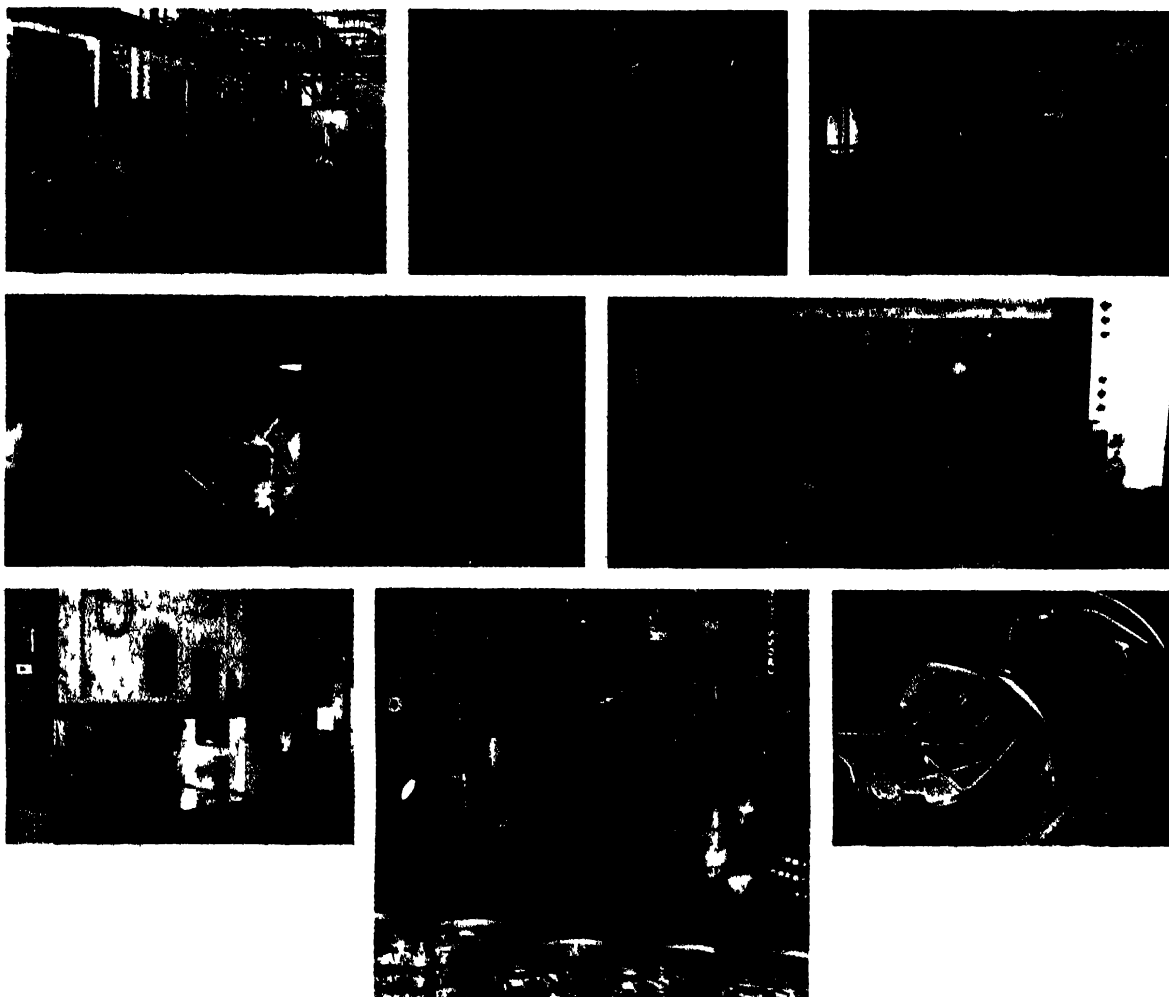
Instability

Maharashtra may be in for a period of prolonged political instability. Reason: chief minister Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar will have to be elected to the Legislature soon. Patil who was denied a ticket to contest the last Assembly elections is now a member of the Legislative Council (he was elected in a byelection) but his term as an MLC ends next year. It remains to be seen what will happen then.

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Khushwant Singh On The Accord

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PEACE AT LAST?



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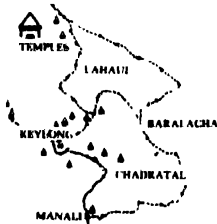
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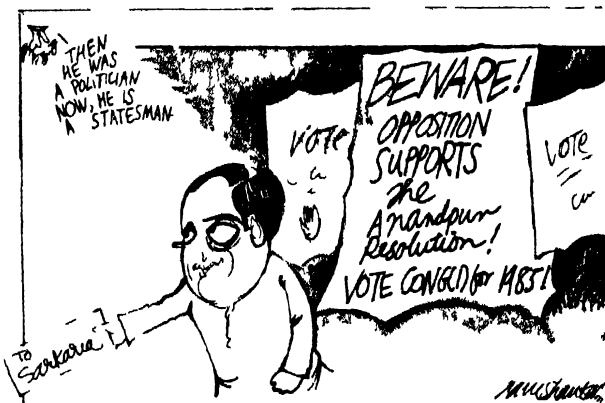
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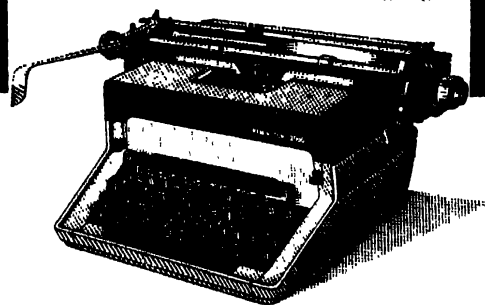
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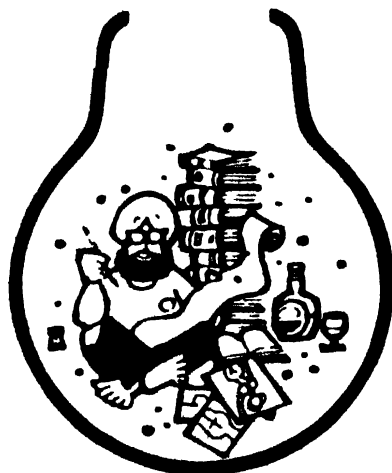
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Bawdy Humour of the Far East

American military presence in the Orient, particularly the prolonged war in Vietnam and the use of neighbouring countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan as "fatigue" stations for battle-weary GIs has produced a sizeable "literature" of Suzie Wong type of anecdotes. Unlike the British, the Americans never suffered from racial snobbery when it came to sex or marriage. Thousands of them married Oriental girls and lived happily ever after, thousands more left behind thousands of American Oriental bastards who, as bastards often are, better looking than legitimate offspring on either side of their parents' families. The more prudent who did not want to be saddled with marriage or care of children took their pleasure in bordellos, massage parlours or with call girls generally referred to as Miss Choi Oi. Red light districts of Saigon (Tu Do Street) and Bangkok's Pat Pong were grist to the mill of dirty story manufacturers and became as common in American parlance as Sonagachi (Calcutta), Kamati Pura (Bombay) and Garston Bastion (Delhi) in ours. Prostitution flourishes in these countries, there is no suitax on the wages of sin. The best place to lav your hands on this kind of literature (or for that matter any kind of literature) is Taiwan. They observe no copyright laws and having lot of paper of their own, bring out pirated editions of American and European bestsellers within a few days of their publication. You can buy a set of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at half the price you pay in India. And although somewhat censorious about letting in pornography published abroad, nothing prevents Taiwanese from publishing it in their own country for export.

Most of these books have a ready market. In the hotel bookstore I was able to lav my hands on only one of the six I was looking for. This was entitled *Confucius Say* by Leo Shaw. The author dedicated it "to those flat-chested, but delightful characters of the Orient." The dedication obviously excludes Indian women. It goes into a paroxysm of alliteration about GIs who would "bounce by the nearest beer bar and break a few bottles of bubbly brew and bat the breeze with his buddies for the balance of the budget and beyond." Shaw was disappointed at the lack of humorous material in the far east so he asked himself, "Why not sift the



sands of centuries and sieve out scads of succulent sprouts of soul shaking, sagacious or silly sentences for the solace of soldiers seeking stimulating serenity after shell shocking safaries in South Vietnam?"

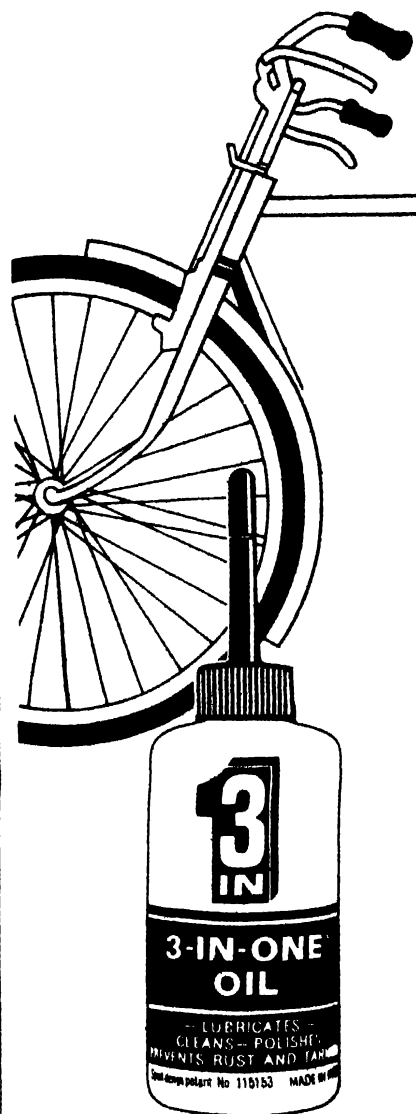
Whatever humour Leo Shaw sieved out of the sands of far eastern sand beaches, he was not aware of the legend of the shape of the anatomy of females of far eastern countries prevalent elsewhere. Not one joke or anecdote is based on this myth. His first Confucian crack is at the expense of Indians "India thinking of sterilising parents of ten. Is O.K. Kids who shack up at that age should be restrained." The next one is aimed at the Japanese "Girl friend in Tokyo writes Dear Harry, you are gone six months and I am six months gone. Shall I carry Harry or commit hara kiri?" The Japanese tale proves the adage "The road to hell is paved with faulty contraception."

Vietnamese girls were the GIs' top favourites. "They can be poor in history, but really great on dates," Leo Shaw assures us. Don't be misled by their being bow legged. "Just because their legs are like ice tongs, does not mean they are frigid." Their being poorly endowed on the way of busts became the GIs' favourite joke. "As one falsie said to another let's pack up and leave her flat."

Next to getting venereal disease it was having a pregnant girl on his hands that was the GIs' nightmare. The pill was not known and abortions risky. Hence the description of an optimist in Vietnam as one who rubbed vanishing cream on his girl friend's tummy hoping it would disappear. The sanest advice this American Confucius could give the randy GI was, "Women over forty best, they don't yell, don't tell, don't swell and are grateful as hell."

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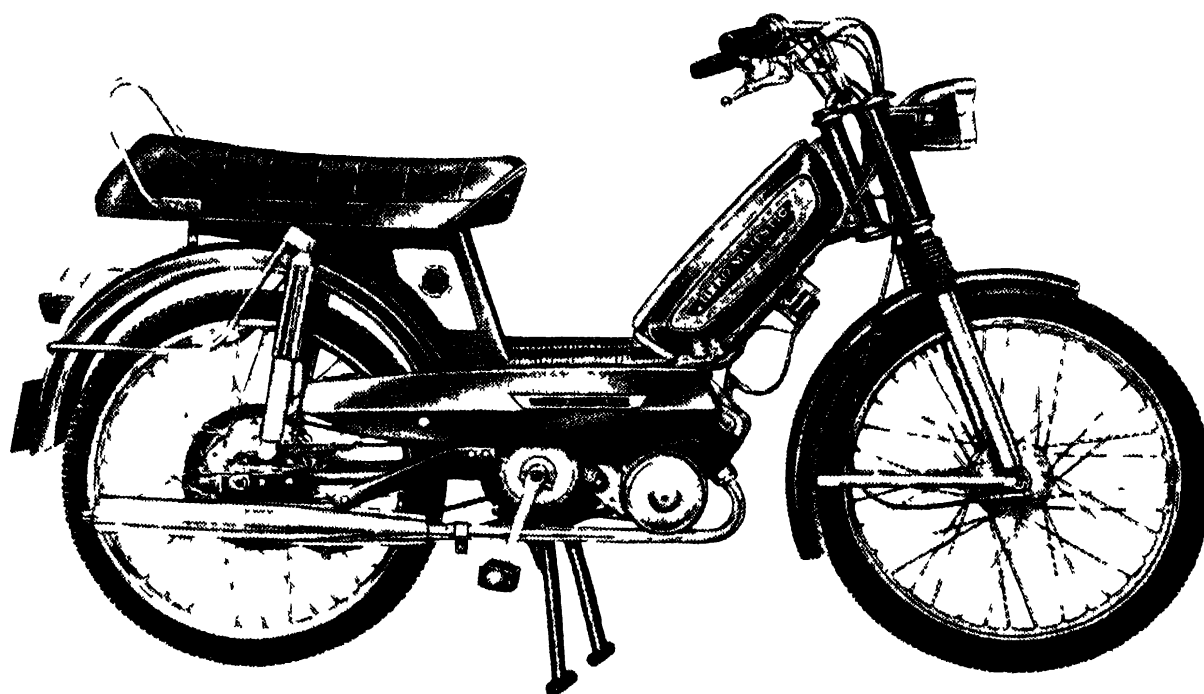
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Omissions of Enquiry

The other day in Bombay I asked Justice J C Shah, who in 1967 constituted the one man commission to demarcate the boundary between Punjab and Haryana, why he had allotted Chandigarh to Haryana. He replied that he had no choice because the figures provided to him showed an overwhelming majority of Hindi speaking people in the city. "I even held a sample survey among the migrant labourers and I came to the same conclusion," he said. Justice Shah could not recall the names of the Hindi speaking areas near Pakistan which he had awarded to Punjab. When I said they were Abohar and Fazilka, he nodded vaguely. He said that his predicament was that Punjabi speaking track intervened and hence he could not give them to Haryana. (Mrs Gandhi in her subsequent award gave a strip in Punjab to make Abohar and Fazilka contiguous to Haryana.)

Justice Shah was quite aware of the controversy which his award had raised. He said many a time that he was sorry if unwittingly he had done anything to complicate the problem. He was at pains to explain that as a judge he had no alternative except to go by the material produced before him and give the verdict he had given. The award of Chandigarh to Haryana was so surprising that when the intimation was received in the home ministry, I P Singh, the then home secretary, could not believe it.

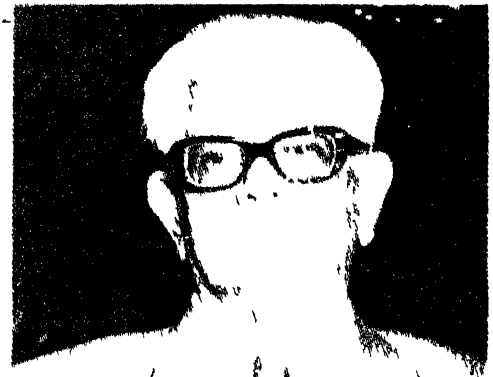
I am recalling all this not to revive old controversies—in any case they have not died yet—but to point out that the terms of reference of a commission can even defeat the purpose for which it has been set up. When the commission was set up in 1967 to adjudicate on the boundary, the government had failed to mention that actually Chandigarh had been built in place of Lahore which was Punjab's capital before partition and hence it was outside the purview of the commission.

As regards other claims and counter claims for the redrawing of interstate boundaries, a commission was to be appointed on Justice Shah's recommendation. But that commission was never constituted. The government changed its own stand on the various suggestions put forward on the Punjab-Haryana border issue. None of them was acceptable to the Akali leadership. I am stressing this to point out how important the terms of reference for the inquiry into the Delhi riots are. The whole purpose of the inquiry can be defeated if the terms are not properly framed. It is important to pinpoint what went wrong and why the authorities failed. It is even more important to find out specifically who were guilty. To not mention this specifically in the terms of reference is a grave omission.

True, the failure of government machinery was reprehensible and should be en-

quired into. But in its terms of reference the commission should be assigned to find out the extent of complicity of individuals or groups in the ruling party, the police and other agencies. Otherwise, Justice Ranganath Mishra, who is inquiring into the Delhi riots, would be in the same quandary as the one in which Justice Shah was. He would have to go solely by the material placed before the commission. This might result in as surprising a conclusion as the award of Chandigarh to Haryana.

The terms of reference—inquiry into allegations of organised violence following Mrs Gandhi's assassination and the recording of measures for preventing recurrence of the violence—are too vague. Owing to this, the actual culprits who mastermind communal riots etc. always go unpunished. It is also important that those alleged to have been involved in the rioting should resign from their government offices. At least one of them is now a minister. His resignation will



Justice J C Shah: no options

not necessarily mean acceptance of guilt. But it is necessary for an objective inquiry. Even if he does not try to influence anyone or cover up evidence, his occupying the chair in the council of ministers is bound to influence policemen or others involved in the inquiry. In fact, if he continues to be a minister, people would tend to believe that he must have exerted pressure to get himself exonerated.

Under the Prime Minister's instructions, no MP, especially those who are being associated with the Delhi riots, is to call on Justice Mishra. But how will this help? In a society where people live in awe of authority and ministers and officials get away with anything, such instructions will be of no avail. The people likely to be intimidated by those in authority are not the judges but those who give evidence. The minister and others allegedly connected with the riots should step down until the inquiry report is out. That means only till the end of this year.

Under the Prime Minister's instructions, no MP, especially those who are being associated with the Delhi riots, is to call on Justice Mishra (who is enquiring into the Delhi riots). But how will this help? In a society where people live in awe of authority and where ministers and officials get away with anything, such instructions will be of no avail.

A Dictator-CM

I was disheartened on reading the cover story *Field Marshal NTR* (14-20 July). When all the major opposition parties were virtually wiped out in the last Lok Sabha elections, it was expected that Telugu Desam would form a viable opposition to the Congress(I). But NTR has drifted towards the ruling party much to the dismay of other opposition leaders. It is indeed ironic that he has stopped meeting the opposition leaders, who had sided with him when he was dislodged from the chief ministership last year. NTR's dictatorial behaviour is not in keeping with a democracy like ours.

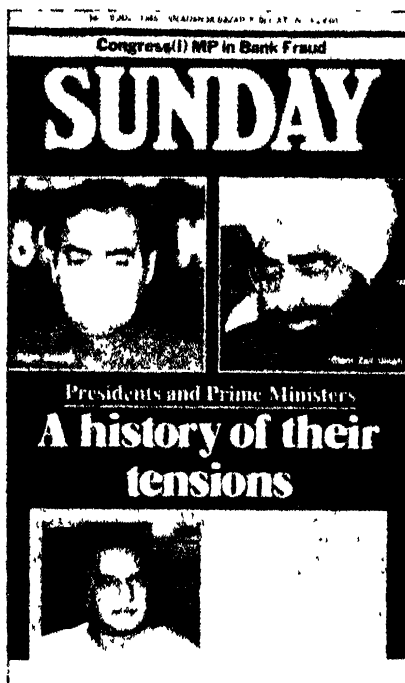
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

•SUNDAY exposed the real intentions of NTR. The multi-millionaire film actor had risen to power by rousing regional sentiments and exploiting his screen image. Andhra Pradesh is suffering under his arrogant and undemocratic rule. Price inflation, corruption and nepotism have become the order of the day. The opposition should sever all relations with NTR and his proposed Bharat Desam.
T.S. Rao, Vizag

•The cover story reminded me of the simile used by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, of a sailor resting on a huge Leviathan, thinking it to be a piece of land, after a shipwreck. When he realises the imminent danger of the actual situation, it will be difficult for him to find a way out. Likewise, the people of Andhra Pradesh seem to be basking in NTR's glory. One only hopes, that unlike the poor sailor, these people wake up from their reverie soon enough to find a way out of their miserable plight.
Arpita Mukherjee, New Delhi

•Like the Congress(I), the Telugu Desam too poses a threat to democracy. It has neither a well defined philosophy nor a tradition. NTR retains his popularity by resorting to gimmicks of different kinds: having his feet washed with coconut water by his partymen and wearing a saffron robe. The people of India should not be misguided by NTR's latest stunt: the Bharat Desam.
Abir Padhy, Berhampur (Orissa)

•The CM's Dictatorial Ways and The Son-in-law Rises suggested that NTR is not very different from the power-hungry Congressmen. Much to the disillusionment of those who re-



turned him to power for a new term NTR has emerged as an autocratic ruler and one who is committed to help his relatives. The mid-day meal scheme, initiated by the Desam government and then suddenly withdrawn, should be reintroduced.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)

•The cover story was bold and forthright. NTR wants people to adore him. Moreover the chief minister is turning a blind eye to the growing corruption in the state. He is also bent upon promoting his relatives. NTR is a changed man now.
V.N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

•In the past, NTR had been projected as a national leader and eulogised for almost all his actions. But now he seems to have fallen from grace. In the cover story he has been depicted as a hot-headed person with little or no knowledge of politics. Is it because of late he has drifted towards the Congress(I) and is not hobnobbing with opposition leaders in our country? However, I strongly condemn NTR's arrogant and high-handed attitude. The journalists and mediamen who have come in contact with him in the last couple of years, must have known of these unpleasant traits of his character. But they have never before said anything against NTR. This is not honest journalism.
A.K. Mookerjee, Purulia (West Bengal)

President Vs PM

The detailed report on the growing differences between Zail Singh and Rajiv Gandhi left me disturbed (*Presidents and Prime Ministers: A History of their Tension*, 14-20 July). The treatment meted out to the President by our young Prime Minister is really surprising. Zail Singh, so far, has exhibited an exceptional maturity in tackling crucial situations. Instead of giving way to his emotions, the President has displayed prudence and self-control in facing challenges. Keeping the President in the dark about crucial issues is an attempt to malign him. The dignity of the President's office must be maintained at all costs.
B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur

•It is extremely unfortunate that President Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi are not sharing a cordial relationship, especially at a time when India is passing through a crisis. Though there are innumerable instances in the past when differences of opinions between the head of state and the head of government had surfaced, the Zail-Rajiv feud seems to be of a different nature. Ironically, it was Zail Singh who had ensured the smooth transfer of power.

Rajvir Grewal, Calcutta

•Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's article was timely and informative. The President of India has been endowed with a number of powers but can he exercise them irrespective of the Prime Minister and his council of ministers? Some constitutional experts have opined that like the British Crown, the President of India has only the 'right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn.' The Indian Constitution is an exhaustive document but it leaves many things vague. Now that a controversy regarding the relations of the President vis-a-vis the Prime Minister has been raised, I feel that the provisions should be cleared.
Abhijit Kumar Sen, Hooghly

Welcome Feature

Small Screen was long overdue and it was nice to note that at last SUNDAY took the initiative to start a column on TV. Television is expanding at an alarming rate and as such cannot be neglected. My good wishes on the new venture.
Chamanlal Agarwal, Sonapur

Terror Tactics

Sudden Death (7—13 July) was informative and touching. Terrorism is playing havoc the world over and fear has become a part and parcel of our lives. All countries should make a concerted bid to stamp out such activities. More details on the terrorist schools in USA and Canada would be welcome. *Sarfraz Anwer, Patna*

●Was the Crash Avoidable? gave a clear picture of the terrorists' activities. It was shocking to note that USA has been indirectly supporting the cause of terrorism. After allowing schools that train terrorists to operate, there is no point in the US government issuing statements condemning terrorism! *R Rajesh Gupta, Ahmedabad*

●No matter how sincere the US government's protests against growing international terrorism are, as long as the terrorist training schools are not banned, extremism cannot be curbed. I cannot understand why Kanishka was allowed to take off even when sniffer dogs went berserk at the Toronto airport. *S Joseph Diaz Nagercoil (Tamil Nadu)*

●Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's investigative report on the Air India crash was simply remarkable. The views were put forward in a very clear and

logical manner. *N Umashathy, Madras*

●It will be wrong to reach a conclusion regarding the cause of the Kanishka accident without concrete evidence. The theory of sabotage by terrorists may not be true and the possibility of destruction of the Boeing by a test missile from a submarine or any launching station, can not be ruled out. *M H Rama, Bhubaneswar*

●The terrorists by launching a successful offensive have proved that India can be attacked both from within and without as long as there are enough inefficient officials. International terrorism should be dealt with an iron hand, with the help and cooperation of all the nations. This world should be a safe place to live in. *N Ellango Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu)*

●I suspect the hand of some foreign power behind the Air India tragedy. This conspiracy should be probed and the culprits who masterminded this heinous act must be traced. Otherwise similar calamities may reoccur. It will not be proper to accuse the Sikhs for the catastrophe, which will further alienate them from the rest of the nation. *Subal Chandra Saha Malda (West Bengal)*

Selling the Dead

The special report *Feeding on the Dead* (30 June—6 July) suggested remedies which are not practical. It has been mentioned that due to the want of dead bodies dissection and the study of anatomy in medical colleges are being adversely affected. But a ban on exports and rehabilitation of *doms* will not solve the problem.

Bechan Jha, Kanpur

●If Ritu Sarin's suggestions are implemented India will not only lose a huge amount of foreign exchange it will throw thousands of *haryans* out of employment. Now when P A Sangma, minister of state, has stated that steps to curb alleged malpractices in the export of skeletons are being taken, it would be judicious not to wound the feelings of the *doms*.

Sukhraj Ray, Calcutta

●I wish to comment on certain points mentioned in the article. The abbreviation JCCI & E stands for Joint

Chief Controller of Imports and Exports and not as mentioned. Moreover, it is not correct that the officials of JCCI & E are not willing to divulge the names of the exporters of human skeletons who have been issued licences on the plea that the subject is a "very sensitive one." Previously human skeletons were allowed to be exported only against a formal declaration from the foreign buyer that the skeletons were required for biological and medical purposes only. As a former controller of imports and exports, I suspected foul play in the procurement of human skeletons by the exporters. I took up the matter with the chief controller of imports and exports, New Delhi, and on my suggestion, a procurement certificate of the human skeleton intended to be exported, was insisted upon from the year 1979. I feel it is high time that the Indian government should ban the export of human skeletons.

T. K. Roy, Howrah (West Bengal)

Fight for Survival

It was a sad and moving experience to go through the article on Ethiopia by Germaine Greer (*A Fight for Life*, 7—13 July). The fact that nothing deters the Ethiopians in their fight against odds won my admiration. I only wish, I could do something to help those people. *L K Awasthi, Calcutta*

●The photographs published with the special report portray vividly the plight of the starving people of Ethiopia. The organisers of the 'Live Aid' programme have done a magnificent job. *Debashis Patil, Sindri (Bihar)*

●I was deeply moved by the plight of the Ethiopians. Germaine Greer's report made me aware of the courageous battle that they are waging against poverty. It is indeed a rare example of man's struggle for survival against nature's calamities. *Arta Mishra, Cuttack*

Corrupt Bureaucrat

Revelry at Public Expense (14—20 July) was a bold expose of the corrupt practices of the chief secretary of Rajasthan. The lavish celebration of the chief secretary's wedding anniversary at public expense only goes to prove the extent of the rot that has set in the bureaucracy. Such people have no conscience or regard for the common man. These bureaucrats are foiling the efforts of our Prime Minister to cleanse the government. Such blatant corruption should be probed and if the chief secretary is found guilty, he should be dismissed from service and the money which he squandered should be realised.

Kashinath Mishra, ex minister, Uttar Pradesh

Festival Politics

Festivals of the Pool (30 June 6 July) was an eye opener. Kuldip Navar gave a true picture of the festivals of India in France and America. It was sad to learn that dirty politics which has contaminated every sphere of our lives, is also an inalienable part of the festivals abroad. Mr Navar has also rightly pointed out that old is not always gold with reference to our culture. It is high time the government considered what kind of India it wishes to project to the world outside. *B Ganesh, Jamshedpur*

COVER STORY

PUNJAB PEACE AT LAST?

By Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

Five days before the Punjab accord was signed, the Akali Dal chief, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, faced with stiff opposition from his colleagues, Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra, decided to seek God's verdict on his peace moves. As per Sikh custom, after offering *ardas*, he at random opened the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The first stanza of the holy book which attracted his attention said, "If invitation has come, then go ahead." When Sant Longowal left the Chandigarh residence of Akali leader Balwant Singh after this *ardas*, he had made up his mind: he was going to New Delhi to negotiate peace with the union government. The efforts of Punjab Governor Arjun Singh, who had quietly initiated the final phase

of the peace negotiations on 2 July, had begun to bear fruit. After five years of bloody killings and communal strife in Punjab, light had been sighted at the end of a tunnel.

On 24 July, Sant Longowal signed the accord with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. For the young Prime Minister, it was a moment of personal triumph. Accord in Gujarat had been reached just a week earlier. The promise of peace in Punjab was the best gift which he could have given to the nation in his nine-month tenure as the Prime Minister. On 31 October 1984, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was murdered and the nation shaken by anti-Sikh riots, no one could have imagined that within nine months the Akali Dal would give up its belligerence and sign the memor-

andum of understanding with the union government. On paper, peace has returned to Punjab. The accord has been hailed by all sections of sane public opinion in Punjab. But the threat in Punjab never came from the Akali politicians. They led a political *morcha* (in which they were overtaken by the extremists, who created a situation which went beyond the control of traditional politicians). Since the murder of Lala Jagat Narain four years ago, the problem in Punjab did not stem from opposition politicians. The threat came from the extremists. The cult of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's father, Baba Joginder Singh, who has inherited his son's following and presently heads the party known as the United Akali Dal, has criticised the accord.

(From left to right) Punjab Governor Arjun Singh, Akali Dal chief Sant Longowal and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the Parliament House on 23 July, beginning of a new era.



While the Anandpur Sahib meeting of the Akali Dal has hailed the accord, dissenting voices have been heard from the former chief minister of Punjab, Prakash Singh Badal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee president, Gurcharan Singh Tohra. There is euphoria surrounding the accord at present. Sant Longowal has managed to carry the day in the Anandpur Sahib meeting on 26 July. After five years of strife, it is difficult to predict if the mood of a political meeting will deter extremists in Punjab. In the monsoon months, a promising dawn can be marred by clouds as the day progresses.

The accord may bring peace to Punjab. But it has created other centres of tension. For the Lok Dal in Haryana and the Bharatiya Janata Party in Rajasthan, the accord has provided issues with which the government can be confronted with. Faced with serious corruption charges, Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal may wholeheartedly welcome the moves of New Delhi. But for opposition leader Devi Lal, Haryana's interests cannot be sacrificed at the present because then the credit for settlement in Punjab will go to the Congress(I). Bhajan Lal had created hurdles which stalled settlements in the past. He had staked Haryana's claim to Chandigarh on the eve of mass resignations by Akali Dal legislators in 1983. The treatment meted out to the Sikhs by the Haryana police on the eve of the 1982 Asiad had sharpened the communal conflict. Now mercifully Bhajan Lal is all praise for the accord. For Devi Lal, who had politically sided with the Akali Dal till the other day, the accord is godsent. He was deprived of the chief ministership of Haryana because Bhajan Lal's defection arithmetic was better than Devi Lal's. Now the opposition legislators in Haryana have learnt a lesson from their ruling party counterparts. They are making political capital out of resignation threats. In Rajasthan, chief minister Harideo Joshi has been critical of the accord because he feels that the interests of Rajasthan have been sacrificed. Opposition leader Bhairon Singh Shekhawat of the BJP is utilising the opportunity to whip up a movement which can restore the credibility of his party. In the case of Rajasthan, it may have been prudent to have consulted the chief minister before the accord was signed. After all Harideo Joshi is not Bhajan Lal. New Delhi should have handled him politically. Apart from Badal and Tohra in Punjab, there are other politicians as well who have been hurt by the accord.

What have the Akalis achieved? While they have managed to get their major demands accepted, they will not be able to explain why they had allowed extremism to grow in the prosperous state of Punjab and thereby affect the economic prosperity of a progressive community. The demand for amendment of Article 25 of the Constitution (to give Sikhs an identity separate from the Hindus) led to senior Akali leaders burning the Constitution of India. Fortunately while reaching the accord, this demand did not prove to be a stumbling block. In 1980 the SGPC under Tohra had passed a resolution declaring the Sikhs to be a "separate nation." This too is mercifully missing from the accord. While the Akalis have retracted from these two extreme stands, the Congress(I) too has changed its stance. During the Lok Sabha elections, Rajiv Gandhi had criticised the opposition for its support to the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. In Ballia, the constituency from where the Janata Party president, Chandra Shekhar unsuccessfully contested, posters had been pasted asking the voters not to elect the supporters of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. With portions of the Anandpur Resolution now referred to the Sarkaria Commission, the stand of Rajiv Gandhi on this seems to have undergone a change. In politics, it may be sometimes prudent not to seek short-term gains. Similarly, regarding Chandigarh, the Congress(I) stand has shifted. In the Lok Sabha elections, the party's candidate from Chandigarh, Jagannath Kaushal, openly opposed the transfer of the city built by Le Corbusier to the state of Punjab. He wanted Chandigarh to retain its status as a union territory. Was it proper for the Congress(I) to have taken this stand on a sensitive issue, especially when the late Mrs Indira Gandhi had awarded the city to Punjab many years ago?

The biggest problem which the Congress(I) will face in Punjab now will be to find a leader for the party in the state. The 24 July accord has effectively seen former chief minister Darbara Singh out of the scene. The Punjab PCC(I) president, Rajinder Singh Sparrow, is not a political heavyweight. (The irony of the party is that till 1972 the present PCC(I) chief was an Akali Dal legislator.) R.L. Bhatia of Amritsar, the AICC(I) general secretary from the state, cannot be the leader of the party in a state where 60 percent population comprises Sikhs. Swaran Singh, the veteran politician, is too old to take active interest in politics. Former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Gur-

dial Singh Dhillon, has been inactive for sometime. To find a leader when the elections are hopefully round the corner will be an uphill task.

In the Akali camp, disunity has already been noticed. Longowal has emerged above Badal and Tohra in the Anandpur Sahib meeting. A plus point for Longowal is that among the advisors of Baba Joginder Singh, Atma Singh, Prakash Singh Majitha and Ujagar Singh Sekhwan are close to Longowal as well. They have differences with Tohra, which made them side with Baba Joginder Singh in the past few months. Through them, Longowal can hope to have a dialogue with the United Akali Dal. Longowal's main opponent, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, is not in a strong position now. Though Badal, the Jat leader, is known as the best vote-catcher among the Akali leaders so far, the equation may undergo a change at the time of the next elections. The disunity in Akali ranks may prove beneficial to the Congress(I). But peace in Punjab can be restored only if the Akalis come to power. Events in the past have shown that militancy comes to the Akali ranks only when the party is out of power. Apart from the extremists, the election arithmetic will also determine whether peace will prevail in Punjab.

The accord is unique. For the first time, the Prime Minister of India has signed a document with a section of the Indian public. The way Sant Longowal sat across the table and signed the document with Rajiv Gandhi looked extraordinary. The accord with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, reached during Mrs Gandhi's tenure, was signed on her behalf by G. Parthasarathi. The peace team led by late Jayaprakash Narain had signed the accord with underground Nagas and the government had supported the settlement. In the early Fifties, when the then Hyderabad state entered into an understanding with the underground communists to end the Telengana movement, while the accord had the sanction of Jawaharlal Nehru, he did not append his signature to any document. The head of government cannot rush to sign documents. It sets precedents for the future. The Prime Minister's assurance should suffice. A signed commitment from him cannot be demanded by leaders of movements. In the euphoria of the accord, certain moot points should not have been ignored. Despite these elements, the accord has brought a sigh of relief to the entire nation. To that extent, hoping that peace will prevail in Punjab, the Prime Minister can be congratulated.

Punjab Lives Again

By Khushwant Singh

Wednesday the 24th of July 1985 will go down in contemporary Indian history as the day of the victory of the forces of national integrity over those plotting the country's disintegration as well as the crowning achievement of Rajiv Gandhi's nine months as Prime Minister. It is an achievement deserving of the awards of Bharat Ratnas for two men, Rajiv Gandhi and Arjun Singh, governor of the Punjab. It is significant that in these final negotiations several men who had played important roles in Punjab's affairs in the past were not consulted. The Prime Minister did not take the President, cabinet minister Buta Singh or Darbara Singh, former chief minister of Punjab, into confidence. Longowal's team did not include G S Tohra, president of the SGPC, nor Prakash Singh Badal, former chief minister of his state but instead two lawyer-politicians, S S Barnala and Balwant Singh, once finance minister of the state.

WHY IT TOOK SO LONG

However, when you examine the eleven point agreement to which Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Rajiv Gandhi appended their signatures on the evening of 24 July, you may well ask: 'Could not have all this been agreed upon before? Why did it take three years of continuous agitation and violence which embittered relations between Hindus and Sikhs to come to a settlement when most points of dispute had been amicably resolved at several meetings with the then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and leaders of the Akali Dal?'

The answer to those questions reflect poorly on the lack of foresight and statesmanship of Mrs Gandhi as well as the Akali leaders who came to Delhi to negotiate with her. On more than one occasion when almost every single issue had been resolved—either Mrs Gandhi or the Akalis resiled from their commitments and cast the blame for the breakdown on the other side. Mrs Gandhi was unduly obsessed with losing electoral support among Hindus of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and the neighbouring states and

being seen as one who knuckled under the arm twisting tactics of the Akalis. This made her rigid in her dealings with them. One example of this was her award giving Chandigarh to the Punjab but making it conditional on handing over the tehsils of Fazilka and Abohar to Haryana. She refused to listen to the plea that Fazilka and Abohar were not contiguous to Haryana and would need a corridor through the Punjab to link them to Haryana. And corridors are provided for only among sovereign states not between states of one nation. She was equally adamant over re-opening the issue of the distribution of the waters of the Sutlej and the Beas of which only Punjab was riparian between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

The Akalis suggested a perfectly reasonable compromise that the matter be referred to a judge of the Supreme Court and they would abide by his verdict. Mrs Gandhi insisted that if the issue was to be reopened it would go to a river waters tribunal. Such tribunals are notorious for the time they take to come to a decision. When wanting an excuse to back track, Mrs Gandhi relied on Bhajan Lal, chief minister of Haryana, the most unscrupulous and mischievous of politicians of post independent India to upset the apple cart. Mrs Gandhi could count on him to raise objections to any settlement with the

Akalis On one occasion when every issue had been settled, Bhajan Lal organised anti Sikh violence in several Haryana towns. The Akalis left the negotiating table in disgust.

On their part the Akalis were equally shifty and showed more concern with their personal political fortunes than the welfare of the community or the country. Every few weeks they added to their list of demands till it made an impressive total of over forty including trivia such as re-naming a train as the Golden Temple Express and declaring Amritsar a holy city. Not only did they keep their *morcha* going and refrained from condemning violence let loose by Bhindranwale's gangs, they alienated themselves from the Indian mainstream by burning copies of the Constitution on which they had taken oaths when they took office as chief ministers and ministers of the central or the state cabinet.

COST OF CONFRONTATION

The three years between the initial launching of the so called *dharma yuddha morcha* and its final termination last week have been the most tragic in the history of the Punjab since independence. Over 200,000 men were jailed, many eminent and innocent men fell victim to assassins' bullets. Lala Jagat Narain and

The Golden Temple in Amritsar



his son Romesh Chander, owners of the largest chain of papers in the Punjab, Dr Vishwa Nath Tiwari, member, Rajya Sabha, Harbans Singh Manchanda, president of the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Sumeet Singh, editor of *Preet Lari*, A.S. Atwal, DIG police, Harbans Lal Khanna, Balbir Singh of the Lok Dal and a host of others—we are still not sure of how many died in "Operation Bluestar" (the government's White Paper is not a reliable document) nor in the anti-Sikh violence that erupted all over northern India following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. The figure, 10,000 dead would be a conservative estimate. It was this legacy of hate and vengeful shedding of blood that Rajiv Gandhi inherited from his mother. To win back the confidence of the Sikhs and restore normalcy to Punjab seemed at the time an almost impossible task.

CHANGED ATMOSPHERE

Several factors helped Rajiv Gandhi to grasp the Punjabi nettle with determination. For one he gained a thumping victory at the polls. The single most important factor in his triumph was the Hindu backlash against what was portrayed as Sikh separatism. The Sikhs had been denigrated from being first class citizens of the country to less than third class and their loyalties had become suspect. The days of the proud Sardar were over and he lost much of his swagger. At long last Akali leaders realised the enormous damage they had done to their own community and became more amenable to reason. At the same time Rajiv Gandhi and his advisers also sensed the peril of having a community of 14

million located on the most sensitive border of the country being in a mood of sullen rebellion. Quite rightly he gave affairs of the Punjab top priority. Akali leaders were released. ban on the All India Sikh Students Federation removed, special courts abolished, enquiry into last November's anti-Sikh violence instituted. All these steps changed the prevailing atmosphere of despondence into one of hope. People of the Punjab, both Hindu and Sikh, had wearied of continuing tension and prayed for the good old times to return.

Rajiv Gandhi, and perhaps more so his chief confidant Governor Arjun Singh played their cards with great skill. They knew that Bhajan Lal was capable of infinite mischief. Fortunately for them serious charges of corruption had been levelled against him. Rajiv Gandhi took cognisance of these charges but decided to hold his hand till the appropriate time. Bhajan Lal saw the sword of Damocles hanging over his head. When the settlement was announced, instead of kicking up a shindig about Fazilka and Abohar as was expected of him, he meekly welcomed it as fair to Haryana.

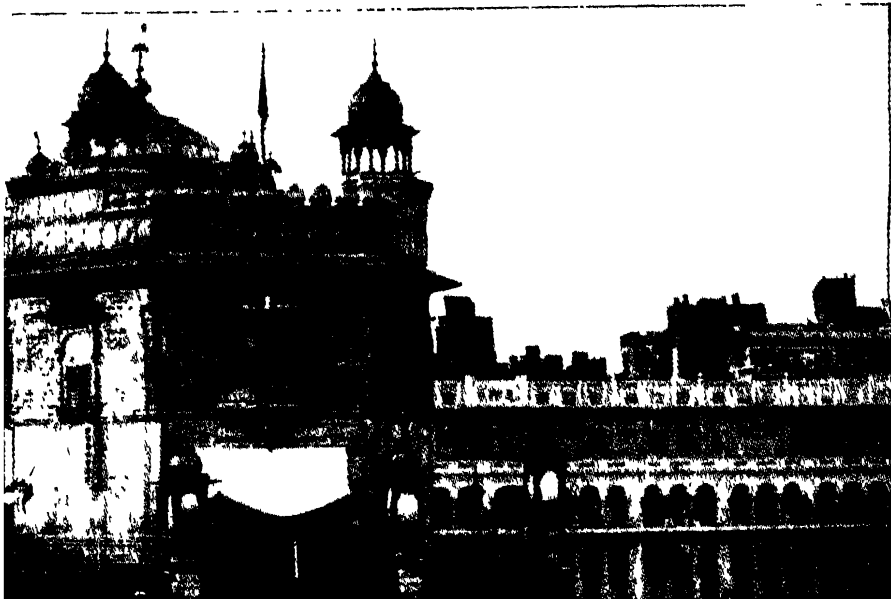
Rajiv Gandhi also took leaders of the opposition parties into confidence. Every negotiation with the Akalis was discussed with them and it was only after he had sensed their approval for the way he was handling the problem that he called Sant Longowal to negotiate a detailed settlement.

SNAGS

There is little doubt that the settlement has been widely acclaimed. There are, however, a few snags that

remain. The most important of these is the question whether or not Sant Longowal will be able to carry the Akali party with him. The extremist faction led by Baba Joginder Singh and Jagdev Singh Talwandi have denounced the agreement as a "sell-out." So has the All-India Sikh Students Federation. None of them count for very much. But G.S. Tohra and Prakash Singh Badal do. Unless they lend their whole-hearted support to Longowal, there will be serious trouble. Their grudging consent makes the unanimous vote in favour of acceptance somewhat weak. Both men aspire to be chief ministers of the state. Badal has a sort of lien on the post and may come round to the conclusion that backing Longowal may be his best bet to regain chief ministership. Tohra is a notorious self-seeker: for 13 years he has hung on to being president of the SGPC and has had two terms as Member of Parliament during which he distinguished himself by remaining a silent spectator or being absent. Unless he is squared with promise of a belly full of *karah pershad* he will prove a sticky customer. If he were to go over to Baba Joginder Singh's camp, the Akali party will be splintered beyond repair. Then there are the terrorists. They have been largely contained. But by no means liquidated. They continue to receive arms, money and encouragement from Khalistani elements abroad as well as from individuals (not the government) of Pakistan. Although progressively more isolated, their capacity to foul the atmosphere should not be underestimated.

And finally, not many non-Sikhs realise that at the root of all the Sikh agitation and the rise of fundamentalism is the gnawing fear in the mind of the Sikhs of losing their separate religious identity and lapsing back into the Hindu fold. The borderline between the two communities is very thin—a cleanshaven Sikh does in effect become a Hindu believing in Sikhism and much the same as the Sindhis and millions of other Punjabi Hindus who worship in Sikh gurdwaras. There are only two ways by which Sikhs can retain their separate identity: one, by appealing to the spartan traditions of the Khalsa and relying on its inner strength, the other is by creating a distance between themselves and the Hindus by emphasising the points of difference, if necessary by rousing fear and hatred against them. Bhindranwale took the second alternative. It is now for the leaders of the community to give the first and the more legitimate alternative a fair trial.



A New Dawn in Punjab

ASHWINI MINNA, whose grandfather Lala Jagat Narain and father Romesh Chander were victims of extremists' bullets, feels that the accord has ushered in a new era in Punjab



Ashwini Minna at his desk in his heavily guarded residence

Sandeep Shankar

The twenty fourth of July 1985 is a harbinger of a new light for this country especially for the people of Punjab. With this day, begins a new era in Indian history. The historic gains of this day will outweigh and outshine the darkness of violence, terrorism and separatism of the past five years.

It was on the evening of 9 September 1981, that my grandfather, the late Lala Jagat Narain, was shot dead. Since then the violence took a turn for the worse and spread all over Punjab and most of north India.

With the violence came separatism which raised its ugly head in Punjab. The anti-national forces abroad took full advantage of these separatist and disruptionist tendencies in the country and at one time it seemed that their plans would succeed and the country would fall apart. But because of the firm actions of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi and the devotion to duty, discipline and loyalty of the armed forces, the plans did not succeed. The armed forces deserve the highest praise. The violence, terrorism and separatism not only snatched away my grandfather but also my father the late Romesh Chander, and so many other politicians, religious leaders and writers like Giani Partap Singh, V N Tiwari, Sumeet Singh, Sardar Harbans Manchanda and Chaudhary Balbir Singh.

Hundreds of innocent Punjabis—walking on the roads, in their homes or in buses—were killed in cold blood. The first phase of this violence, which had started with the assassination of my grandfather, ended with the assassination of my father and Operation Bluestar.

In the second phase of the terrorist movement, our late Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, had to sacrifice her life at the hands of her own Sikh security guards. In the third phase, a large number of innocent Sikhs in Delhi and in northern India suffered because of the vengeful communal violence. The recent bomb explosions in Delhi and perhaps, the ill-fated Boeing crash could also be attributed to this phase. In the fourth phase which has just begun it is now possible to see some light at the

end of the corridor. There is a ray of hope, a breath of fresh morning air. After the accord was arrived at between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Akali Dal leader Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, it was felt that the reign of fear and terror in Punjab will be over and peace will reign again.

Of course, all kinds of views will be made and opinions expressed regarding the accord. But what must be remembered is that the Akali Dal consists of not just two but four groups of Sikhs and the views and actions of each one matter.

The first and the most important group is that of Sant Longowal. Keeping the interest of the Punjabis and the country in mind, Sant Longowal has arrived at this accord. Whatever be the past record of this group, the end (which is the accord) justifies the means. It is a marvellous, courageous and praiseworthy action and for this, all credit goes to the Sant whose name will be written in letters of gold in the history of Punjab and the country.

By coming to terms with the government, Sant Longowal has reunited the Sikh community with the mainstream of Indian thought and life. This action has the support of the entire Sikh business community, owners of trucks and buses, and industrialists, besides to some extent, the farming community. Whether this is due to economic or political reasons is immaterial. The fact remains that without the Sikh community's return to the Indian mainstream the country is incomplete.

The second group is led by Baba Joginder Singh. This group has the support of Jagdev Singh Talwandi and the All India Sikh Students Federation. The aim of this group seems to be to make a hero of the Baba by creating obstacles in the way of any understanding that the Longowal group and the centre may arrive at. This was known to the centre and Sant Longowal. Hence, the centre gave no encouragement to this group, which lacks a constructive ideology.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of the Punjab issue is that the third group led by the former chief minister of Punjab, Prakash Singh Badal and the president of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, G S Tohra, have expressed their opposition to the accord. This may have been expected of Mr Tohra as he is capable of taking any stand for the sake of political expediency and personal safety. But this was never expected of Prakash Singh Badal by the Hindus of Punjab as he has always been



Policemen escort a Baisakhi procession in Amritsar.

in the forefront of Hindu Sikh unity and integrity of the country, and certainly not now, just when the new dawn has brought fresh hope and light on the Indian horizon. Though this group may be happy to note that all the demands of the Akalis have been accepted, Badal's stand is strange. His attitude may be due to the leadership issue, which has been the bane of Akali Sikh politics. Punjab's political history is a mute witness to such struggles. There is no doubt that Sant Longowal will make an all out effort to persuade Badal and Tohra to join him. But his efforts are not likely to succeed until the leadership issue is resolved to Tohra and Badal's satisfaction.

The fourth group consists of certain individuals who have nothing to do with the Akali Dal. But for the last four years, this group has been misleading the Akali Dal into confrontation with the government, disruption of normal life, terrorism, separatism and violence. This group comprises smugglers, anti-national and anti-social elements, criminals, extremists and foreign spies. The anti-national and anti-social elements may have a personal or political axe to grind and the main aims of this group are to spread communalism, violence, unrest, dissension in Punjab and bring about the disintegration of the country. These people are certainly not true Sikhs.

Without keeping Sikh politics and its background in mind, most people think that the Punjab problem has been solved. In my opinion that is not quite correct. Only a partial solution has been found and the next six months are crucial. The centre and the Akali Dal have to tread carefully. The centre is thinking of holding elections in Punjab. Though it is a step in the right direction, the elections should only be held once the centre is confident that the law and order situation in the state is completely normal. Otherwise everything achieved so far could be lost, perhaps for ever.

For Sant Longowal, it is a period of intense struggle because he has saboteurs all around who would do anything to see this accord collapse by any means possible. Sant Longowal's success would lie in the efforts to bring all or as many as possible, of the other groups together. Will he be able to achieve this unity? Time will tell. However, if the Sant can bring all other groups together, he would have achieved a second victory, the first being the accord with Rajiv Gandhi.

The author, who is at present the head of the Punjab Kesari chain of newspapers, lives under heavy guard in Delhi. After President Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, he has the largest posse of securitymen in Delhi.

The Costly Delay

The euphoria of the present should not cloud a critical examination of the past to derive object lessons for the future, says K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN

While the nation can heave a sigh of relief at the accord reached between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and president of the Akali Dal, Sant Longowal, the costly delay in resolution of the conflict in the sensitive north-western border state contains many object lessons for all those who are interested in the future of this country. In the euphoria of the present, we often tend to forget the complexities of our national existence and a sub-continental polity. While we harp back on the glory of our ancient civilisation, we fail to recognise or comprehend our cultural, regional and ethnic diversities. It is these diversities which make the problem of nation-building an arduous and unparalleled task. India, even today, is a nation in the making. It is only through democratic institutions and values and through these processes that we can survive as a nation. For it is only these processes which would help expression of these diversities and resolution of all possible conflicts inherent in the situation. Yet another bond axiomatic to our survival is the bond of secularism. After Mahatma Gandhi, it was only Jawaharlal Nehru among our leaders who understood its significance in a true historical perspective. During the last decade and a half, unfortunately, the political exigencies of national leadership were allowed to dominate the decision-making processes which were eating into the vitals of the system. The painfully protracted delay in finding a solution to the complex web of problems in Punjab typically reflects this approach.

This resulted in an atmosphere charged with terror and intimidation for various sections of Punjab's population, the near-alienation of the brave Sikh community from the

national mainstream, the tragic assassination of the former Prime Minister, and open abetment and encouragement of divisive trends which, in turn, left an imprint on every facet of our national life.

The background of this must not be traced to the much-maligned Anandpur Sahib resolution of the Akali Dal

attitudes from the passage of the Anandpur Sahib resolution in October 1973 till the framing of a specific charter of demands by the Akali Dal in September 1982. There was constant and continuous jockeying for power. It created a climate of discord, suspicion and later, even of violence.



Baba Joginder Singh with followers doing the parikrama of the Golden Temple

alone. The resolution was the main weapon of the present Prime Minister to smear the national opposition during the Lok Sabha poll campaign. The partition of the sub-continent and the impact it produced on the Punjabi ethos, the linguistic controversy deliberately engineered and promoted by the communal elements in Punjab, the remarkable breakthrough in agriculture achieved by the Punjabi farmer and the failure of the leadership in Punjab and in the union to initiate an appropriate developmental process in the state, had all contributed to the building up of a situation where conflict was in the air.

The opportunism displayed by the national and state leadership of the ruling party and the powerful Akali Dal is to be judged in the context of the unpardonable refusal of the union government to implement the Indira Gandhi award on Chandigarh, kept frozen since 1970 and Akali

The Akali Dal submitted a Charter of 45 demands in September 1981, only to reduce it to a revised list of 15 demands within a month. These contained, as is now generally known, demands on the status of Chandigarh, built as a dream-city and a crowning achievement of the celebrated architect Le Corbusier—nurtured by Jawaharlal Nehru as a capital of undivided Punjab. The Charter included demands on the sharing of waters of the Ravi and Beas, certain religious demands confined to the Sikh community and a lot of vague aspirations born out of some confused thinking, and confused attitudes. It also included the wider issue of centre-state relations which ought to have been squarely faced and put on the national agenda for debate and resolution.

The way the union government, led by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and her party dealt with this problem, which had many ramifications

The author, who is general secretary of the Congress(S), actively participated in the tripartite talks held to resolve the Punjab tangle. It is interesting to note that a formula proposed by Mr Unnikrishnan on 18 February 1983, almost reads like the accord reached between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal last week. It may be recalled that besides Chandra Shekhar, he was the only one to come out sharply against "Operation Bluestar."

COVER STORY

tions, makes a study in the politics of controlled escalation. An attempt was made to link up certain Akali ambiguities with secessionist movements without any mass base, of little consequence and a cult of violence promoted by an ally of the ruling party, J S Bhindranwale. A mad monk was sought to be built up as a myth and a legend, under whose protective umbrella all kinds of anti-social elements, from smugglers and peddlers of narcotics and an odd assortment of antisocials and criminals flourished to create an atmosphere of crime and intimidation. He was sought to be built up as a bulwark to the moderate Akali leadership who, even though they understood the game, did not display any political foresight or moral courage to come out in a forthright manner against the senseless violence perpetrated by Bhindranwale and his coterie. The union government, on the other hand, Nero style, seemed to be playing the fiddle while Punjab burned.

On 9 September 1981 Lala Jagat Narain was murdered and on 20 September, after great hesitation Bhindranwale was arrested to be released only on 15 October which was a turning point in the course of subsequent developments in the state. After a brief spell of negotiations in October 1981 for a whole year, the union government consciously built up an atmosphere of confrontation and controlled escalation. The chief ministers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan were, in between, forced to enter into an agreement on the sharing of waters in December 1981 as frustration mounted in the Akali ranks and unbridled violence became a normal feature of existence in Punjab.

Another ploy of the Congress(I) leadership was to prevent any understanding between the Akali Dal and the various opposition parties. But the opposition could not produce a worthwhile and significant framework for solving the problem, in 1982. In January 1983, however, they succeeded in compelling the Prime Minister to initiate talks which resulted in several open and some secret meetings, wherein the present Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, was also initiated into the tortuous course of negotiations. In the first meeting with Indira Gandhi in January 1983, many of the opposition leaders had expressed their misgivings and reservations about some of the demands of the Akalis. To outmanoeuvre them, the government decided to ban the sale of tobacco in the precincts of the Golden Temple.

The government was soon compelled to start the tripartite talks on 24 January 1983. But the tripartite talks entered a meaningful phase only when they were resumed in February. It was the opposition dialogue with the Akali Dal, which concretised many a formula and in this context the role of Chandrajit Yadav, Prof Madhu Dandavate, Chandra Shekhar, Sharad Pawar and I K Gujral, deserve special mention.

It was after a great deal of persuasion that the Akali leadership had been brought to the negotiating table. The Akalis had decided to resign from the state legislature and Parliament and had fixed 21 February as the deadline for it. The deadline was hanging like the proverbial sword of Damocles when the opposi-

tion took over. After the meetings, Chandrajit Yadav, myself and Prof Dandavate had with the Akali leadership, I gave a formula during the tripartite sitting of 18 February. I had hoped then that it could be implemented by 14th April 1983, Baisakhi day, which is not merely a New Year's day but a day of rejoicing, hope and cheer for all Punjabis alike. My formula included the transfer of the capital project area of Chandigarh as per the award of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and financial assistance from the centre for building a new capital township in Haryana. It included a suggestion for a one man boundary commission to be appointed immediately to examine the census and revenue record as on 1 January 1983, regarding the



A devotee and his child take a holy dip in the sarovar adjoining the Golden Temple

linguistic composition of the villages claimed by the respective states.

The commission was to submit its report by 31 March and the central government was to consider this report on the basis of the principle of contiguity of disputed villages and announce a final award by 5 April. The dispute about Fazilka and Abohar *tehsils* of Punjab, where 300 villages were claimed by Haryana on the basis of 1970 award, were also to be examined by the commission. The opposition pleaded with the then union ministers participating in the tripartite talks, like the then home minister, P.C. Sethi, finance minister R. Venkataraman, P.V. Narasimha Rao and Shiv Shankar, that the Akali MLAs and MPs should not be allowed to resign *en masse* on 21 February. Mr Sethi expressed his reservation and thought that Haryana would suffer.

The Akalis late in the evening accepted the formula, which was further modified by Chandrajit Yadav who suggested that 17 villages in Punjab be given to Haryana in exchange for Chandigarh. When the formula was about to be accepted, Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal came on the scene and demanded a Rs 100 crore grant from the centre and a matching loan. If the centre was not prepared for this, he suggested division of Chandigarh into two halves and both the states locating their capitals there. He also wanted immediate transfer of 300 villages in Abohar and Fazilka to Haryana. It must be said to the credit of Akali leaders that they were willing to accept this formula, provided the centre was willing too. It is my firm belief that the central leadership then used the Haryana chief minister, Bhajan Lal, to block the smooth passage of this formula.

The second major issue on which, to my mind, the Akali stand was not quite reasonable, concerned the sharing of surplus waters of Ravi and Beas. This dispute dates back to the mid Fifties, a period prior to signing of Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan in 1960, on 29 January 1955. The centre had divided the utilisation of Ravi and Beas waters between Punjab and Rajasthan. The main underlying idea behind the settlement then was that the Rajasthan desert was to be converted into a fertile area fit for cultivation. Thus, while allotting 7.20 MAF (million acre feet) of Ravi-Beas waters to Punjab, the 1955 award gave eight MAF to Rajasthan. This had attracted international sympathy and consequently, the World Bank and UN had pressurised Pakistan to sign the treaty.

The sharing of waters between Punjab and Haryana was decided in March 1976 during the days of the Emergency, when the then Haryana chief minister, Bansi Lal, enjoyed a special position in the corridors of power in Delhi. As per this award, both Punjab and Haryana got 3.5 MAF each while 0.20 MAF was given to Delhi and 0.65 MAF to Jammu and Kashmir. After the Emergency, the then Punjab chief minister, Prakash Singh Badal asked for re-opening of the issue. But during the Janata period, no settlement was reached. In December 1981, however, after the flow series of these two rivers was revised, allocations were further modified. Punjab now got 4.20 MAF, Haryana 3.50 MAF and Rajasthan's share was raised to 8.60, while the share of Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir remained the same. Whatever be the political background to this award, it was totally unacceptable to the Akalis, who claimed that Rajas-

than was currently using only 5.0 MAF. The Akalis insisted that on the basis of actual utilisation, Punjab be given the surplus of Rajasthan quota. The Akalis depended on actual utilisation formula while Rajasthan, supported by the centre, took a stand on the basis of allocation. Rajasthan had a powerful argument: to deprive it of water for the sake of Punjab, where 85 per cent of the land was already irrigated, cannot be construed as reasonable or based on equity. That was the view the opposition leaders also shared and our proposal to send it to a tribunal was acceptable to the Akalis. But for reasons best known to them, the union government spokesman in the tripartite talks discontinued the negotiations and the Akalis started the *Rasta Roko* and *Rail Roko* agitations and came up with a further demand of codifying the Sikh personal law.

The Akalis had attended the Vijayawada conclave of opposition parties and had demanded a special session to discuss the Punjab problem. It was convened in June 1983. All the opposition parties repeated their confidence in resolving the dispute amicably. But the centre discontinued the tripartite talks and kept mum on the matter. As the opposition conclave reopened in Srinagar in October 1983, the same day the Darbara Singh ministry resigned and President's Rule was imposed in the state. This was the response of the centre to the opposition's proposals. In January 1984, after three full months, Rajiv Gandhi had yet another secret meeting with Akali leaders in Delhi and tripartite talks were resumed after one full year on 14 and 15 February. In the meanwhile, violence escalated in Punjab, the entire atmosphere was fouled up and the centre's attempt at confronting Akalis directly did not produce results as objective conditions had totally changed in Punjab. In March and April, secret negotiations continued as the White Paper reveals and in June, the fateful decision was taken for the Operation Bluestar resulting in a chain of tragic consequences.

It is very clear from the foregoing narration of events, which cannot be challenged, that the delay has been costly and unproductive and it has only resulted in disastrous consequences for national integrity and unity. For a while it looked that, like Bourbons, we would never learn anything and never forget anything. Now that Rajiv Gandhi has altered the scenario, it is to be hoped that we will be able to re-learn lessons of the past.



Hindus and Sikhs rejoice on the streets of Amritsar

Sandeep Shankar

Light at the End of the Tunnel

But the night of the long knives is not yet over, feels JANARDAN THAKUR

Happily an accord has been reached, but the solution is still far in the future. The agreement is no more than a little light at the end of the tunnel which remains to be crossed. A long long tunnel full of pitfalls, and it is easy to lose sight of them in the prevailing euphoria. Let's be thankful there is at last a little light to move on with, but let's not forget that at one fell swoop the accord can still be reduced to a mere scrap of paper.

The knives have not returned to their sheaths, the guns are still ablaze, the night of the long knives is still on. The killing of an unwary police officer in Amritsar could be a notice to those who are rejoicing a little too soon, it could be a signal of the turbulence ahead.

Sant Longowal has no doubt shown immense courage—even statesmanship—albeit belated. So has Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He has demonstrated his sincerity and determination to pull the country back from the precipice to which his mother had pushed it. One had almost thought he would never stop carrying his mother's cross, that he would keep on pursuing the same suicidal course. Mercifully he has taken a turn, or so it would seem, for without a change of course, without shedding Mrs Gandhi's mistrust and paranoia he could never have brought Sant Longowal to the table. That by putting his own signature to the accord he threw another convention to the winds only goes to his credit, at least in this case. It brought him and Longowal closer than any other gesture would have.

Both of them deserve to be congratulated—the Prime Minister particularly, for having chosen as his vehicle a man whom everybody thought a bizarre choice. Hasn't Arjun Singh proved, at least as of now, that he was the right man for the job? How foolish all of us glib sceptics look in retrospect.

Congratulations they deserve, but their real test is now. The real worth of the accord would depend on a number of factors, not the least of which is the ability of Sant Longowal to stand up to his own medley flock

which is already trying to pull him down. As far as the government is concerned, Longowal is the key figure on the other side, and with him the accord would stay up or go down. Right from the time that the new initiative was taken soon after the Assembly elections, Arjun Singh had been working beaver-like on Sant Longowal, and much as he shifted his ground and blew hot and cold, he was at least netted.

"I yielded on my own ground!" the Sant might well exclaim. So be it, if this gives him and his followers the exhilaration of a victor and acts as a balm to their wounds. But one only hopes that they do not start behaving like arrogant victors, for that would generate its own reaction among the "vanquished," signs of which are already around. Between the accord and its implementation there could fall a shadow.

But then let's remember, the need for statesmanship is far greater on the government's side than on the other. The Sant has had to indulge in much acrobatics and turnabouts in order to build his own credibility among the Sikh masses, a credibility which had been completely shattered in the wake of Operation Blue Star. Not that he has regained it completely, many still consider him a "great failure." And some have even started calling him a "Sarkar Sant," which is perhaps why he keeps reverting to a belligerent tone ("I shall start another *morcha* against Delhi if need be."). You have to understand his predicament—he has to win the support of a lot of Sikhs, particularly the fiery young ones, who are still in no mood to bury the hatchet. One would imagine that while a large majority of Sikhs in Punjab—and elsewhere—were sick and tired of the ongoing confrontation and all the attendant insecurity, there was a small but determined band of Bhindranwale men who thought the idea of "Khalistan" had taken roots and they had to go on fighting for it, no matter what the cost. Egging the fiery adventurers were the dollar-rich Chauhans and Dhillons who had nothing to lose—except perhaps some dollars of which they had plenty to burn—and everything to gain.

Ganga Singh Dhillon and the men of his ilk had started dreaming of their "own separate fiefdom!"

Many in the country still tend to pooh-pooh the reach and clout of these so-called Khalistanis. That would be dangerous, especially now that they would be desperate. To them the accord must look like the undoing of their dreams, but knowing how fragile the accord still is, they would be only too tempted to strike and undo the work that Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal have done. Far greater vigilance is needed now than ever before.

What is more, the fate of the accord would depend on how fast Sant Longowal is able to convince his own flock and those who, perhaps recognise no authority save the demonic memory of their "martyred saint"; that his is the only sane course for them: Ballot not bullet. If they can win power in Punjab through the democratic process and have the good sense to dump all their quixotic dreams, the state might still begin to breathe again.

On the other hand, this welcome possibility presumes a much greater sagacity and foresight on the part of New Delhi than it has shown in the past. One does not know for sure, but one hopes the Congress(I) is not hoping to rule Punjab after the elections—if and when they are announced. That would once again put the clock back, dangerously so. A much wiser course would be to allow the Akalis to rule the state, and to clean up some of the mess they and their men have helped to create. But will they?

Far more important than the written terms of the Rajiv-Sant accord are the unwritten ones—the tacit agreements between the two sides which, of course, cannot be put down on paper. There are those who believe that there is indeed such an agreement between the two sides; the Akalis would be allowed to come back to power in Punjab, and that as long as they function within the ambit of the Constitution there would be no hindrance from the centre. If this is true it would denote a totally new *persona* on Delhi's throne. Let's wait and see.

Countdown to Peace

INDER KUMAR GUJRAL, who played a role in bringing Sant Longowal to the conference table, recounts the events since March

The accord has roused a vast positive response. The voices of discord and protest have discernible motivations. It bears repetition to say that the Sant has exhibited a distinct quality of leadership. Rajiv Gandhi—rising above the emotions of his personal tragedy—has passed with laurels the first major test of his prime ministership. To our polity the three morals should go home once again: One, that political problems can be effectively disposed of only by political means. Use of harsh measures by the state or efforts to push the point with the help of a bomb or a pistol causes more injury to the user. Two, that while dealing with its own people a government—particularly the democratic one—has to understand the feelings and emotions that emanate protest. And the “healing touch” when needed, should be dispensed both speedily and credibly. Three, while the nation is very sensitive regarding its integrity, the political elite must understand the complexities and processes of the nation-state formation particularly of a diverse society like ours.

Longowal's evolution as a leader of vision and of his policies can be interesting: when he came out of jail in March this year, he was faced with a very unfamiliar ground-swell. The Akali agitation had spilled out of its confines and a series of tragic events had, on one side, raised the walls of alienation between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Hindus in the Punjab felt deeply insecure, and the Sikhs had been badly mauled—both physically and emotionally. An angry and frustrated Sikh youth had chosen the path of violence and revenge to settle their perceived scores.

The Sant's travels in the villages and towns of Punjab did not end his agony or groping. In the first few weeks he tried to go along with the youth but soon felt that it would only end in his following them down the precipice rather than weaning them to his thinking. In his absence, the second rank of the party leadership had announced their intention to launch another *morcha* on Baisakhi day—12 April. This had caused an all round anxiety.

Along with Kuldip Nayar, ambassa-

dor Gurbachan Singh and Prof Maheep Singh, I went to Amritsar to assess the situation. Our two-hour-long talk with the Sant ended his groping and our anxiety. He was categorical in restating his faith in the Indian unity, the inter-communal amity and abhorrence of violence. He accepted our suggestion to come over to Delhi and travel elsewhere in the country before recommending to his party the next line of action. His visit to Delhi and his addresses to various audiences provided a turning point to the vexed history. It transformed his image and also changed his own picture of the realities. The government was also forced to revise its assessment of his personality and his policies. Also its own political compulsions and needs in the post-election era had changed. It now badly needed a breakthrough.

The sudden emergence of Baba Joginder Singh and his committee blurred the vision for a while but that too opened a new phase in the Sant's politics. For the first time he had to unequivocally respond to the frontal onslaught launched by an alliance of the extremists and his classic adversaries. As he said at the closed door meeting of his leading associates—Tohra, Badal, Barnala, Balwant Singh and some others—they had to pick up one of the three available options: to join the Joginder Singh committee, to confront and resist them or to withdraw from the scene and let the government directly face the new factors.

His colleagues were unanimous in their rejection of the first proposition of joining the Baba. The option of confrontation presented the ghastly prospect of a bloody “civil war” amongst the Sikhs that would comfort only their enemies and adversaries. Longowal led the way in following the third path. He resigned from the presidentship of the Akali Dal. Badal and Tohra also stepped down from their respective offices.

Longowal felt that taking on the new factors could be postponed but not avoided. Tohra was apprehensive that a total estrangement from the radical Sikh youth was neither advisable nor politically advantageous. Badal—with his endearing background—had a dilemma of his own:

most of his friends and supporters had defected to join the committee led by Baba. He wanted to wean them back. Under no circumstances could he think of widening the chasm between them and himself.

These compulsions have fashioned their post-accord attitudes and pronouncements as well. Longowal's resignation caused, once again, rather unexpected reactions. For the first time the Sikhs outside Punjab, the intelligentsia, the media and more specifically, the government perceived that Longowal's absence would further complicate the Punjab problem.

For the first time, since Operation Bluestar, the rank and file of the Akali Dal and others saw that despite severe strains, the party infrastructure had survived and its influence at the grassroot levels had endured the stress. The local leaders too perceived a danger to their own status and position if their command was allowed to collapse. By rallying around the Sant, they maintained a show of strength of the party, thereby cutting to size the new “united” Akali Dal.

The reemergence of the Sant at the helm of affairs added to his self-confidence, stature and propped his policy postures. This was also the end of the “collective-leadership” phase. His erstwhile partners were still undecided. To the perspective mind it was clear that the new power parities would have their own fall-out.

The Joginder Singh ‘Dal’ could not muster enough strength since it suffered from some inherent infirmities. Its leadership comprises three heterogeneous components: the defectors led by S. Atma Singh, the Talwandi faction and the youth with their extremist philosophy. The politically inexperienced Baba Joginder Singh does not possess the skills to stamp out internal differences and create an effective party.

It is very easy for them to take an anti-Longowal stand but far more difficult to evolve a viable policy frame. The Sant went round communicating his message of panthic unity with great zeal. “Enduring unity can only be built around a shared ideology. A collection of individuals generates a mythical unity that does

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not last," he told an audience in Jaipur.

Sant Longowal's reemergence raised hopes of a settlement. On 29 June the Punjabi group addressed a communication to the Prime Minister and the Sant. We spelt out the details of a possible settlement—our emphasis was more on the urgency of the finalisation.

Sant Longowal had told some of his associates that a negotiated settlement demanded a tension-free atmosphere. Credible releases of those arrested during the Punjab movement, abolition of the special courts and withdrawal of the Draconian laws would induce a detente. "The role of our group was not to mediate but to act as a moderating influence." His message was communicated to the PM who responded favourably.

As is known, the ground work for the accord was done at Chandigarh primarily by the Governor and the Balwant Singh-Barnala combine. The negotiations had two distinct characteristics: one, the mediation and negotiation was confined only to one channel and the protagonists, the PM and the Sant were stamping their approval at every step.

Before responding to written invitation from the Prime Minister, the Sant assembled his colleagues at

Chandigarh. Both Tohra and Badal were sceptical. They delved a great deal on the past experiences that had caused frustrations and deepened misgivings. But the Sant posed three queries: firstly, is it feasible or even desirable to sustain a *morcha* particularly if their objectives are not secessionist. Secondly, when a large number of innocent youth have been incarcerated for such a long period, how are they to be rescued. And finally, any agitation has to take into account the insecurities and sufferings of the three million Sikhs residing outside Punjab.

With these questions in mind the Sant could not perceive any other method for diffusing the tension except through talks and negotiations. In the end, being a deeply religious man, he resorted to the dictum of the holy book. The Delhi talks had their difficult hours and depressing moments. Both sides realised that a failure this time would be disastrous. And such a feeling resolved differences.

Will the accord endure? By and large there is a discernible sense of relief in Punjab and the rest of the country. But the reactions of Tohra and Badal have caused some disappointment. Part of their irritation stems from the feeling that at the

hour of glory they were ignored. But more important is their assessment of the "youth power" and the impact it will have on the forthcoming elections of the SGPC. In the Akali politics, the gurudwara committee elections are far more important than the other polls.

At this moment one important issue has come to the fore: the holding of the Assembly polls. Its pros and cons require careful examination. It is a constitutional compulsion that the new Assembly should be sworn in before 5 October, the election campaigns will be launched by the contenders within two weeks from now. I see some dangerous protends in this. A highly polarised situation is likely to emerge along communal lines: the Sikhs supporting the Akali party and the Hindus backing the Congress(I). The election propaganda is likely to emphasise the divisions, the past happenings and the atrocities of either side. The end result will also create an Assembly that may be dead-locked. The demographic reality and the desirable national objectives require some sort of a coalition of communities in Punjab. Ever since 1947, the durable government that generated amity were the ones that were based on an overt or covert coalition: the Congress-Akalis, the Akali-Jan Sangh and the Akali-BJP.

Single party governments have sowed the seeds that ultimately caused agony. Some cooling-off period of, say, four months, will reactivate the traditional Hindu-Sikh relations and the political adverseris of today may forget the part and come closer to each other. In case either the Akalis or the Congress(I) wins the polls, we may sooner or later, get back to square one. The divisions of the canal waters has raised protests in Haryana and Rajasthan. It is nobody's case that Tom should be robbed to feed Peter. The allocation should be just and according to need. As a matter of fact the nation's destiny demands that we revise our attitudes and emotions regarding the vital inputs: water, energy and so on. These should no more be treated as divisible "assets." A comprehensive national plan should work out the water management policy and at the time of allocations the supply-benefit ratios—both economic and social should be kept in mind. Another important need is the speedy completion of the Thein dam, to add to the total kitty of the available water. I can only end by repeating the Gandhian edict "In this, no one has won or lost, the nation and the sanity here prevailed."

Balwant Singh displays a copy of the accord signed by Longowal (left)



How Far is Peace?

By NIKHIL CHAKRAVARTY

A new milestone has been reached in Punjab with the formal signing of the memorandum of settlement between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Akali Dal leader, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal in Delhi on 24 July. No doubt this promises to defuse the mounting crisis in Punjab, but it is too early to say that peace is round the corner in the troubled state of Punjab.

The 12 years since the Akali Dal first formulated the Anandpur Sahib Resolution on 16 October 1973, Punjab has gone through an ordeal which brought neither peace nor prosperity to its people and the Sikh community suffered as much as others in the turbulence. Now that the Akali Dal leadership in the wake of the Delhi settlement has formally abandoned the *morcha* launched three years ago on 4 August 1982, it is time for it to soberly introspect whether all the suffering and killing brought about by it could at all be regarded as worth the cost, since what they have got today could have come to them more than two years ago, particularly after Sardar Swaran Singh's two rounds of talks in October 1982, or even in June 1983 when the centre had sent out fresh invitations for talks.

The reason for this protracted arrival of statesmanship in the Akali leadership was its fallacy in trying to use the extremist pressure in its bargaining with the centre through out this time. Right upto the middle of 1984, the Akali leadership let the extremists, particularly the Bhindranwale gang call the tune, and through the threat of confrontation, calculated to extract concessions from the centre. They condemned Operation Blue Star but did they leave any option open to any political party to negotiate on its behalf when they themselves made room for Bhindranwale and his armed gang to kill innocent citizens, operating cowardly from the safe precincts of the Golden Temple? If anybody was responsible for the launching of the army operation against the Akal Takht in Amritsar, history will clearly award its verdict against the Akali leadership. Had the Bhindranwale terrorism that was at the time mounting all over Punjab not been put down with a heavy hand, it would



(From l to r) Kirpal Singh, Longowal and Tohra at a party meeting

have marked the beginning of the disintegration of the Indian state structure.

No doubt it is to be welcomed today that Sant Harchand Singh Longowal has at last come forward and has signed the settlement memorandum, signifying thereby that the core of the Akali leadership has at last turned its face away from the path of confrontation. At the same time, it is too early to say whether Sant Longowal would be able to carry his team with him. Although the settlement was ratified by the Akali party conclave, it is an open secret that both Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra have kept their options open, and would watch the mood in the Akali Dal itself, besides each angling for the prize post of the leader of the Akali party in the legislature after the coming election in the state.

Secondly, Sant Longowal has yet to reckon with the challenge of the extremists, located in the so called "United" Akali Dal and in the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF). Both these groups are so far unreconciled in their temper. This seems to indicate not only their disowning the Delhi settlement but also striving for continued deadlock which they hope would help to pave the way towards autonomy and ultimately Khalistan. It will undoubtedly be a formidable campaign for Sant Longowal to undertake against the extremists.

Thirdly, the Akali leadership has to take into account the mood of the non Akali Sikhs. By the 1981 census, the Sikh community constitutes 60 per cent of the Punjab population. It is estimated that the Akali influence

is effective over about 40 per cent of them. Thus a considerable section of the Sikhs, apart from the other communities (constituting as much as 40 per cent) has to be won over if the Akali leadership hopes to establish its hegemony over Punjab politics. By its disastrous entente with the extremists, the Akali leadership antagonised the Hindu population, and as a result, communal extremism has also distinctly come up within the Hindu community.

Sant Longowal and his colleagues in the Akali Dal thus face a difficult task. They will have to reverse out right the line they were following in the last few years: first, establish their own leadership within the Akali Dal by hounding out the terrorists from public life, then, win the goodwill of the non Akali Sikhs, and finally of the substantive non Sikh population of Punjab.

On the side of the government, the tasks are no less formidable. The touch of the dramatic with which Rajiv Gandhi's agreement with Sant Longowal has been publicised unleashing euphoria all round, cannot cover up the difficulties that the government will face in the weeks and months ahead.

From all accounts, the settlement has been brought about by the labours of Governor Arjun Singh acting on the direction of the Prime Minister who took counsel with only some of his cabinet colleagues. Even at the final stage, Rajiv Gandhi did not think it necessary to maintain the facade of having consulted his party leaders in Punjab. If Gianj Zail Singh is put in the cold storage as part of the seasonal cold war between the President and the Prime Minister to which New Delhi has now got accus-

tomed, it is noteworthy that none of the other Punjab leaders including Darbara Singh, was called in as a matter of courtesy. Even the newly-appointed president of the Punjab Congress, General Rajendra Singh "Sparrow" was not brought into the picture.

At the same time, normalcy can return to Punjab only with the activation of the Congress, and not by keeping it in a state of supreme inactivity. The Sikh supporters of the Congress(I) as indicated by the results of the last general election, were not inconsiderable in number. During these years of turbulence, many of them might have drifted away from the Congress or have gone inactive. If these are not activated once again, Punjab politics is in danger of being demarcated along communal lines—the Akalis bossing over the Sikhs, and the Congress(I) and the BJP contesting for the support of the non-Sikhs.

The manner in which the memorandum of settlement has been drafted generates the premonition that Rajiv Gandhi has abandoned all hope of the Congress retaining a foothold in the Sikh population and reconciled to the Akalis enjoying hegemony over them. In a sense, this resembles what happened to the Congress in Tamil Nadu at the time of the 1971 general election. At that time, Indira Gandhi desperately in need of ensuring comfortable majority in the Lok Sabha, had struck the deal with the DMK, letting it contest majority of the Assembly seats in return for DMK supporting the Congress in majority of the Lok Sabha seats from Tamil Nadu. The result over the years had been that the Congress in Tamil Nadu has been reduced to the status of a junior partner to either DMK or AIDMK.

It would not be unfair to draw a similar conclusion from Rajiv Gandhi's understanding with Sant Longowal, leaving the key to the Punjab politics in the hands of the Akali Dal, preferring to let the Congress play a second fiddle to it. Unlike Tamil Nadu, Punjab has an active unit of the BJP, and it will be left to the Akali leadership to choose as its coalition partner either the Congress or the BJP.

How the Akali party has been conceded the status of primacy could be seen from a study of the memorandum of settlement itself. For one thing, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution against which Rajiv Gandhi himself had campaigned during the Lok Sabha election as the charter of the country's disintegration—and attacked opposition parties, all and sundry



Akali Dal members raise their hands in support of Longowal during a party meet

with little respect for truth, of having succumbed or subscribed to it—has now been permitted to be formally mentioned in the document which he has signed as the Prime Minister.

Secondly, the memorandum states that the government of India will be bringing forward legislation for a fresh all India gurudwara bill, thereby permitting itself to be more deeply involved in a patently non-secular area. And here too, the implication is that the dominant voice will be that of the Akali Dal.

Lastly, Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India—and not as the leader of the Congress(I)—has appended his signature to a document along with the leader of the Akali Dal. In other words, the Prime Minister has signed an official document providing equality of status to the leader of a political party. No party or movement within the country has even been accorded such a status. The government in the past brought about settlements with parties or movements without making the Prime Minister a signatory to such agreements. Neither the cessation of communist intransigence in Telengana in 1951, nor the Samyukta Maharashtra movement and the Naga uprising in the Fifties and the Sixties, nor the Kashmir accord with Sheikh Abdullah in 1974, had the imprimatur of the Prime Minister's signature. When this was raised by

this reporter before a senior minister, the reply was that the precedent of Gandhi-Irwin accord of 1931 was followed. What is perhaps not fully realised is that the Gandhi-Irwin accord marked the first major recognition by an alien government that in course of years it would have to hand over power to the other party concerned—an implication which became a reality 16 years later in 1947.

Has Rajiv Gandhi and his team understood the implications of his step? Sant Longowal would be justified in claiming before his flock that the government of India has had to recognise the Akali Dal as being on par with it. Besides, what will stop any future movement, such as the Jharkhand or the Assam agitation leaders demanding similar status? It appears that the present establishment in search of a dramatic effect, has betrayed its innocence of the actual implications of state power, of which the Prime Minister under the Constitution, is the repository.

It is only to be hoped that in taking the next steps towards restoration of peace and goodwill in Punjab, the Prime Minister and his team will move with caution, so that their understandable itch to do something new, does not take them away from the path of wisdom born of rich experience in the running of the Indian democracy.

Time, the Only Healer

AMRINDER SINGH, scion of the former ruling family of Patiala, who resigned his Lok Sabha seat and quit the Congress(I) after Operation Bluestar, feels that the Sikhs must close ranks and support Sant Longowal

The agreement reached between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal on 24 July has been acclaimed all over the country. As an editorial in a national newspaper put it, "The severest crisis to have engulfed India since independence has ended." For the Sikhs too, never before in their recent history have they had to face a crisis of this magnitude. However, the pain, the anguish, and the humiliation suffered by the community cannot be forgotten or ended by the mere signing of an accord. Time is going to be the only healer, but a very positive beginning has been made and some irritants removed. Some issues, however, are still to be resolved. The Sikhs would require the support and understanding of the people of the country and the Prime Minister must also look into and remove two major irritants that still remain and which can stand between complete normalcy and unsettled conditions in Punjab.

Let us remember that the pre-Bluestar period was different—the country was then pressing for a settlement and the government was under pressure from all quarters to

put an end to the crisis. However, since Bluestar, the situation has changed—there are many who still speak of teaching the Sikhs a lesson. If, in spite of this a settlement has been reached, and a beginning made, it is because of Prime Minister's statesmanship and the courage, vision and foresight of the president of the Akali Dal, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal.

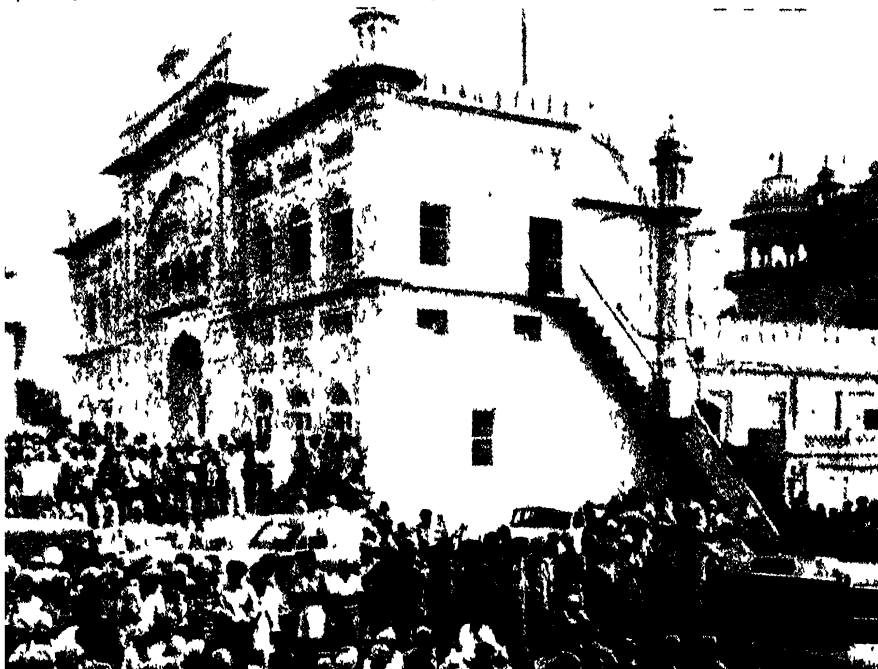
For the Prime Minister it was a promise he was honouring as well as his duty. But for Sant Longowal this was an extremely difficult decision in view of the feelings expressed by the Sikh political leadership from time to time including from some of his own party. Many in the country accused him of drifting with the tide or being indecisive but he took this decision in the larger interest of the country. I am sure he was aware of the criticism he was going to face within certain quarters of the Sikh community, even to the extent of threats to his life. For rising above all this and sticking to his convictions, he not only deserves the admiration and support of the vast majority of the community but also of the country.

A settlement could easily have been reached in 1981. This time, two major concessions have been made on which the talks constantly floundered during that period. If only this agreement had been reached in 1981, then Punjab and the Sikhs would have been spared the agony of the past three years, particularly of 1984. No agreement is ever reached without a compromise. One cannot go to the negotiating table expecting to come away with a ten-zero score, but in spite of the changed situation and the weaker bargaining position Sant Longowal found himself in, Punjab's interests were kept in mind during the settlement.

The delinking of Chandigarh from the Abohar-Fazilka award and the re-opening of the river waters dispute are the two major concessions made by the centre. For Punjab, it was essential that both these issues were resolved not only for future political stability but also to ensure the economic survival of the state. Punjab has 105 lakh acres of cultivable land growing paddy and wheat. The minimum requirement of water for optimum production is five acre feet taking Punjab's total annual water requirements to 52 MAF. The total available water in the three rivers, Beas, Ravi and Sutlej is 32 MAF, of which Punjab has the use of 13 MAF. In addition, 20 MAF water is pumped from the ground by the six lakh tubewells in the state giving the farmers in Punjab 33 MAF of water against a requirement of 52 MAF. The excessive pumping of ground water to make up for the lack of river water has led to the lowering of the water table. The reopening of the water issue will now enable us to present our rather strong case to the commission rather than accept an arbitrary award detrimental to Punjab's interests.

Before the Punjab crisis can be resolved in full, the PM must, as a follow-up to the settlement reached, resolve the question of the Sikh soldiers and the release of our youth and other detainees. These are issues where the emotion of each Sikh has been aroused and without a settlement of these issues I do not foresee a complete return to normalcy in the

People wait outside the Keshgarh Sahib gurdwara for the outcome of the Akali meet



state The government has its point of view—that it cannot interfere in army matters or that those charged with waging war on the country must face trial in the special courts. The Sikhs, however, feel that the soldiers reacted to extreme religious provocation and must therefore be treated with compassion and leniency. The detainees, they feel, must be given justice.

We are a democracy, and in a democracy, the army is subservient to a democratically elected government. Whenever the government feels that it is expedient in the nation's interest to order the army to carry out its instructions, the army will do as ordered. Hard decisions are necessary at times and if the PM wishes to make a final settlement, as I am sure he does, this is the time for these decisions. There are precedents: for instance, 25,000 officers and men of the 60,000 Indian soldiers held in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps during World War II broke their oath of allegiance and took up arms against their comrades and their former army. It is a matter of opinion whether the INA situation and trial can be compared to this situation, but then it is also a matter of opinion whether the loyalty of a

soldier is more to his country as in the case of the INA or to his religion on which he takes this oath, as in the case of these Sikh soldiers. In both cases the oath of allegiance was broken. In the case of the INA trials no officer, though convicted, served his sentence. They were simply dismissed from service. If the intention is to convict these soldiers for the sake of military propriety and then to set aside these sentences, then these soldiers should be dismissed and later rehabilitated elsewhere. But if the court martial convictions are to be allowed to stand, they will not be accepted by the Sikhs.

Almost similar is the question of the Sikh youth facing the charge of waging war on the country. The Indian legal code applies to all who break the law in the country regardless of position or standing. If we accept this, then double standards cannot be applied for the same crime. The SGPC president G S Tohra was named in Parliament by the home minister as the Sikh leader whose activities the government took a very serious view of, and who was charged with waging war on the country. If he was one of the first to be released, then why are the youths

being treated differently? In spite of this reasoning, the government insists on trying them, and if the Sikhs as a whole are to feel that justice is being done, these cases must come up in open court, under the law of the land.

The PM has shown foresight in his settlement with Sant Longowal. He must now put an end to this sad chapter in the history of Punjab. The Sikhs too must close ranks and support Sant Longowal and the agreement to enable him to pursue the settlement to a successful conclusion. The Sikhs in general I am sure, will give him their full support. It is sad however that as I write this, there are a few Sikh leaders, some from his own party who are either sulking, sitting on the fence or simply saying 'no' because Sant Longowal says 'yes'. Let them remember that the interests of the Sikhs and Punjab is foremost and they will become irrelevant in the Sikh mainstream if they put their interests or their ego before the interests of the community as a whole. This agreement is essential not only to usher in an era of peace in Punjab but also to ensure the future of the 18 crore Sikhs living in Punjab and in the other states of the country.

Longowal: Hero or 'Traitor'?

The news of the accord led to mixed reactions in Amritsar. While the Longowal supporters hailed it, AISSF activists called Longowal a 'traitor'. Sankarshan Thakur reports

There were no laddoos distributed at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, news of the Gandhi Longowal pact came in late on 24 July and they did not immediately know how to react. The next morning there was a clash. As a joyous procession of Akali Dal (Longowal) activists marched to the Teja Singh Samundari Hall shouting slogans like *Sardare Aazam Longowal, saari qaum tere naal* (Great Sardar Longowal, the entire community is with you), a group of firebrand All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) youths confronted them.

Qaum da gaddai (Longowal (traitor of the community Longowal) they yelled. The showdown could have been bitter and bloody, but Longowal's men kept their cool, they bypassed their challengers and settled into the Teja Singh Samundari Hall to laud the accord and put their stamp

of approval on it. Still there were no laddoos. The atmosphere inside the temple was tense. While one group was hailing it as a great victory, the other, right across the road, was decrying it as a 'sellout'. Still holding out its guns.

They operate from the same incomplete building the united Akali Dal of Baba Joginder Singh and the AISSI. In a small room plastered with portraits of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Amrik Singh and other AISSF activists killed during Operation Blue Star, sit about a dozen *kesari* clad young men, spewing venom. "This Longowal has no *locus standi* to sign an agreement on behalf of the Sikhs," says Swaran Singh Khalsa, "we are not going to agree to this *sauda* (sellout). We shall see how they implement this accord." Another angry one butts in, "Longowal forgot all our thousands of

brethren who are languishing in jails while he was selling himself in Delhi and eating laddoos on top of it all." This is no agreement, they say, the fight with New Delhi will continue. In an adjoining room, the united Akali Dal secretary, Suraj Singh, lends his voice to the AISSF. "Is this any agreement?" he scoffs. "And they want to hold elections after this? We shall see how elections are held in this state till our demands are not met." But in the Shiromani Akali Dal (I) office, Longowal's young aide Rawail Singh is all enthusiasm, sitting on a pile of congratulatory telegrams that have been pouring in from all over: Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Bhatinda, Patiala, Attari, Chandigarh, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Bhopal, London, Birmingham, Ottawa, Washington. "Just have a look for yourself, everybody has welcomed the accord, the

people have welcomed the move, they are all with us," he says and dismisses the protestors across the road as "a minority that will soon lose its voice." Will it? "Everytime we talk of solutions," says Sajjan Singh, a rich landlord from Ferozepur and a staunch Bhindranwale supporter, "We are reminded of the day the tanks rolled into this temple. How can that be corrected? I do not know but certainly not with an agreement in New Delhi."

On the Golden Temple *parikrama* itself, fresh posters of Bhindranwale and Amrik Singh have come up: "The struggle is not over, the *morchha* will continue." Pilgrims collect around them, read patiently and walk away. Seldom does anybody comment. An uneasy calm surrounds the Darbar Sahib. One camp in the Temple rejoices, the other reacts virulently, the people hang from the same string of hope that has snapped so many times. Fanning flies in a corner of the Temple, the wizened old Sardar Attar Singh remarks mockingly: "Has anything here been for the people to decide? It was always a game of the leaders and it is the same today. Let them fight it out. How do we come into the picture? Wait and see what they do."

Looking out at the downpour from his office on the outskirts of Amritsar, the Communist Party of India (CPI) veteran, Satpal Dang, voices similar apprehensions. "Now is the real time for the test. One slip by Longowal and we will be back to square one. The thing to watch now will be as to how successfully he can resist the internal pressures from the Akali Dal. If he tries to give them a sop by saying they would launch another battle for the rest of the demands, that will be the undoing, he has to tell them you have had enough, now work for reconstruction. But it is quite likely that he might go the wrong way..." This is exactly what bureaucrats in the Punjab Raj Bhawan at Chandigarh warned about the previous day, the Akalis turning their victory into defeat, the infighting overshadowing the agreement and reducing it to the beginning of another phase of strife. The wheels of crisis have already begun to turn again. People have jumped camps, enemies have become friends, friends enemies.

A day before the Akali Dal session at Anandpur Sahib, Prakash Singh Badal was ostensibly busy recommending truck licences and college admissions for his followers at his palatial Chandigarh home. "Why have you come to me?" he asked, "Go and talk to those who have signed the agreement... they



A hoarding in Ludhiana spreading the message of communal harmony

Sandeep Sharma

will tell you the story." Every now and then he would get up from his seat and disappear into an ante-room where, according to one of his associates, sat Tohra's men. The strategy for the Anandpur Sahib session was being planned. All day long they discussed the Gandhi-Longowal accord and their decision came out in the open the next day when at Anandpur Sahib both Badal and Tohra abstained from ratifying the agreement. "What course Badal and Tohra would decide to take in the coming days," remarked an Akali leader in Chandigarh, "Would partly decide the way Punjab will go." It is only too well known that Badal is a leader with a substantial mass base in Punjab and Tohra, a man of great will. But political observers in Chandigarh feel Badal does not have much of a choice in the present circumstances, he has always supported the cause of communal harmony and moderation in Punjab—which is one of the reasons for his popularity also. Can he now afford to switch gear? "If he does that," remarked a newsman in Chandigarh, "we will be politically isolated. Most people in Punjab today are for peace, they will go with anyone who offers it."

Public opinion in favour of peace in Punjab has taken efforts to build up. Slowly, the folk songs woven around the feat of Satwant and Beant Singh have died down. The "shahidi marches" extolling Bhindranwale are no longer taken out. The mood of confrontation has lost its edge. The Jalandhar press, often blamed for taking a rabid stance in the past has sobered down. The news of the agreement in New Delhi was greeted by one and all—from *Punjab Kesari*, *Ajit* to *Akali Patrika*. The Jalandhar press was unanimous in its appeal for peace. The reason behind this is not only some clever handling of the media by Punjab Governor Arjun Singh (who incidentally has been renamed Sardar Arjun Singh after the signing of the accord) but also a growing demand for the normalisa-

tion of the situation. In the past, while the *Punjab Kesari* had been blamed for taking a pro-Hindu stance, the *Ajit* and the *Akali Patrika* had posted themselves on the other extreme. All of them are now spreading saner messages. Said Vijay Kumar, editor of *Punjab Kesari*, "There is a growing realisation that peace must return to Punjab. The agreement is certainly a positive step that we wholeheartedly support but let us see how things work out in the Akali Dal itself."

The agreement, apart from a minority in the Golden Temple, has been welcomed all over the state but people seem to be wondering whether the time has come to heave a sigh of relief. As Gurbux Singh Wrik, one of the editors of *Akali Patrika* remarked: "Even though the agreement has been signed, it is yet to be implemented. Much will depend on how that is done and also on what happens in the Akali Dal in the next few weeks." And then he voiced the same demand that the AISSF is making: "Thousands of Sikhs are still in jails. The tension will not end till something is done about them." But yes, he did agree that the *Akali Patrika* thought the agreement was a step in the positive direction and he did feel optimistic about the future "if everything turns out well."

"It will be a matter of very careful handling," explained one of the top officials in the Punjab government. A single false move, a single lapse in security and the whole crisis could bounce back." But then he added that once the situation had been brought to such an optimistic level, it would not be allowed to slip out so easily. "Not only is the administration in Punjab geared, the people too are supporting this bid for normalcy in the state," he said.

The problems of Punjab are not over yet. This is only the beginning of the end and as Satpal Dang of the CPI remarked, this beginning will have to be capitalised upon.

A Secret Deal

Could the Rajiv-Longowal accord have been signed so hastily and with such smoothness without the utmost secrecy that had gone into its preparation? Probably not. All previous attempts of the government and the Akalis had floundered primarily because of the publicity they had received which had invariably incited the extremists to step up their activities. Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal had learnt lessons from the past. Thus, although formal communications between the two leaders started as early as 2 July, neither side gave any indication that an agreement was being worked out.

The extent of the contact between the government and the Akalis through the good offices of Punjab Governor Arjun Singh was only a matter of speculation for the media. But no newsman, even those considered closest to the government, knew anything about the ground that had been covered. This tendency of playing while holding their cards close to their chest became evident on the evening of 22 July when there was a cryptic announcement by the government that the Prime Minister would be meeting the Akali Dal chief the next morning. Newsmen were busy trying to dig out from the files enough material to give the "story" a

first lead treatment. On 23 July Rajiv Gandhi was at Parliament House at nine in the morning, closeted with members of the political affairs committee (PAC) comprising home minister S.B. Chavan, defence minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and finance minister V.P. Singh. At 9.45 am a dark blue Mercedes swung into Parliament House and came to a screeching halt at the main portico. When Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh stepped out, they were received by a beaming Arjun Singh and escorted to the Prime Minister's office. The formalities of 'introduction' over, the aides of both Rajiv



Sant Longowal coming out of the Keshgarh Sahib gurdwara after the Akali Dal meet ratified the accord

Sandeep Sharma

Gandhi and the Sant withdrew, leaving the two leaders alone. The summit meeting had begun.

The doors were opened 30 minutes later. As Longowal came out, the newsmen surged forward with their queries. The Sant however, was silent. "Both of us have authorised the Prime Minister's secretary to speak," he said and along with his two aides stepped into the waiting Mercedes, and drove away instantly, a *kesari* cloth showing from the rear window.

Later, the two aides of the Sant had lengthy discussions with members of the political affairs committee. Arjun Singh and the cabinet secretary, P.K. Kaul were also present during the negotiations. Suspense hung thick over the air.

There were certain hitches. The talks were getting stalled over the question of Chandigarh. Arjun Singh, it seems, had assured Longowal that the issue would not be linked to Fazilka and Abohar. The PAC was insistent on the linkage between the two issues. And then there was the question of the river waters being referred to a tribunal. Would the share already pledged to Rajasthan also have to be adjudicated? Longowal's aides insisted that they would but the PAC took the opposing stand. Added to the two issues was the rather ticklish question of the army deserters.

On 24 July it seemed for sometime that the accord would be difficult to reach. Longowal had a closed door meeting with his two aides even while Rajiv Gandhi was holding discussions with members of the PAC. P.V. Narasimha Rao is said to have been particularly insistent that the government should not concede Chandigarh without linking the issue to Fazilka and Abohar, or that the share of Rajasthan waters should also be a part of reference for the tribunal. He had been closely involved with the problem.

But Rajiv Gandhi did not wish the talks to be grounded once again. All that had been patiently achieved over the last few months would be lost, giving the hardliners among the Sikhs an opportunity to create more mischief. He decided to be more conciliatory. The government's willingness was communicated to Barnala and Balwant Singh when they met the PAC members and Arjun Singh at 2 pm, and at 3.45 in the afternoon the Akali leaders once again held closed-door talks with the Prime Minister. The sweets which followed told the waiting newsmen that a settlement had come about. Soon the Prime Minister was telling the leaders of the opposition in Parliament,



G.S. Tohra, SGPC president (left), entering the Keshgarh Sahib gurdwara on 26 July

that the accord had been signed. What seemed impossible only two days back had been made possible.

So engrossed was the media with the rapid developments, that they did not notice certain significant omissions and commissions that went with the talks and consultations. Certain key people in the government and the Congress(I), who were closely involved in the Punjab crisis were totally ignored.

President Zail Singh missed it all. He was not in the capital on 23 July and even though he came back to New Delhi at noon on 24 July almost three and a half hours ahead of schedule, he was not told anything till the announcement was made in Parliament. There have been reports to suggest that the Giani was deliberately left out in the cold. It seems that the dates had been chosen carefully to coincide with the President's absence during the period. Rajiv Gandhi, it has been suggested, was not too happy with Zail Singh's "over-involvement" in Punjab affairs.

Darbara Singh too did not figure in the consultations. Nor did the new Punjab PCC(I) chief Major Gen. (Retd) Sparrow. It was clear that the Akalis felt that their presence would stall further negotiations. Only two of the cabinet sub-committee, that had been formed to solve the Punjab tangle, P.V. Narasimha Rao and S.B. Chavan, were involved as members of the PAC. The third member of the sub-committee, education minister K.C. Pant was not among the Prime

Minister's select few. "KC" has not contributed much to the sub-committee and his lack of initiative on the Punjab front has virtually forced the Prime Minister to ignore him.

The Haryana chief minister was always close at hand. But he was not allowed inside either and Bhajan Lal made no protests. Perhaps, the recent memorandum of charges the Opposition leaders had given against the Haryana chief minister to the Prime Minister, has dampened the spirits of the irrepressible Bhajan Lal.

On the positive side, Arjun Singh emerged as a virtual hero having earned the gratitude of both Rajiv Gandhi and the Akalis. Arjun Singh had the last laugh. "You thought I had been kicked out when I was appointed Governor of Punjab a day after I was sworn in as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh," he asked newsmen with a big grin. It seems certain that the major task in Punjab having been accomplished, Arjun Singh will be given a more important assignment after the elections are held in the strife-torn state.

V.P. Singh too has emerged as a man of "trust" something that is, of the utmost importance in the Congress(I). So have P.V. Narasimha Rao and S.B. Chavan. The trio are likely to be closely associated with the Prime Minister in many more major initiatives. At the moment they must be preparing to use their prowesses to solve the tangle in Gujarat and Assam.

S. Vijay, New Delhi

The Anandpur Sahib Accord

It was perhaps in the fitness of things that the first major accord between the Akalis and the centre should be taken to Anandpur Sahib to be ratified by the party's working committee. Anandpur, the birthplace of the Khalsa, had been in the minds of the people as an anathema because of the resolution which had been passed here—the resolution which had ultimately underlined the postures adopted by a majority of the Sikhs, including the Akali Dal, as well as the government. The Akalis thought it to be their major plank, while the centre presumed that the document would divide the country.

However, the going was not as smooth as the Akali Dal members wanted it to be. Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was greeted as a victor returned from war, but the jubilation was marred by objections from two senior members, Prakash Singh Badal the former chief minister and Gurcharan Singh Tohra, president of the SGPC.

In a closed-door meeting which lasted about two hours on Friday, 26 July, Longowal and S.S. Barnala tried their best to convince the two dissenters about the benefits that would come from the agreement. Yet they were unfazed. Later at the congregation which included former members of Parliament, former legislators, select members of the SGPC and district jathedars, the two waxed eloquent on what they termed a "meaningless accord."

Badal took the members who had assembled on the top floor of Gurdwara Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur, on a tour of recent history. The Sikhs, he said, had lost their dignity and honour. After a hardhitting speech which recalled the events since the *morcha* first began, Badal told the meeting that the agreement had been of little benefit to Punjab. On territorial issues, the state would be getting less land than earlier envisaged. The major problem of army deserters had not been solved satisfactorily because out of about 10,000 who had left their barracks on that fateful night after Operation Bluestar, only about 280 would be rehabilitated. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution, which had been the basic document for the Akali Dal, had been truncated in the agreement. A very small portion had been given to the Sarkaria Commission, which was not what the Sikhs wanted. Moreover, the document was silent on the issue



Prakash Singh Badal (left) with a party supporter near Anandpur Sahib

of young people who were behind bars. Tohra too found the document full of holes. The men who had made sacrifices for the Sikh cause, including those who had revolted from the army, would not easily forgive them for entering into such an accord, Tohra said.

But others who spoke were generally in favour of the agreement. Some were pained that men like Badal and Tohra should raise objections when so much had been achieved. One jathedar made an emotional speech asking the two not to express dissent at this time. Without their wholehearted acceptance, the party would die, the man said. And so when the resolution adopting the accord was put to a voice vote, which in a gurdwara would mean the response of the congregation to the slogan *Bole So Nihal*, with the cry of *Sat Sri Akaal*, Badal and Tohra apparently went along with the popular mood.

That there would be objections to the agreement was clear to the party from the beginning. Before starting the meeting they politely asked the two dozen or so Indian and foreign journalists to leave, saying that the meeting was a private affair among the party members. The Akali Dal is still a very religious party and they started the meeting with a prayer in front of the *Granth Sahib* and ended it with an *ardas*; the priest invoked the blessings of God for the success of the accord.

Later, at a press conference, Longowal tried to gloss over the objections raised by his two senior colleagues. "The accord was accepted

unanimously," he stated. However, when pressed on the issue, he conceded that "some apprehension" was expressed but it had been satisfactorily answered. Outside, among the majority of the general public and the Akali workers, there was a muted sigh of relief. A number of them stated that the accord was the first wind of change in a state which had been brought to the brink of chaos.

Yet there was no unanimous welcome. Only the youth when questioned would answer that they had not got what they wanted. The agreement had come so suddenly that a lot of them were still uncertain as to what it meant. As a group, the young were waiting for a word from their elders. And the answer they were receiving was not very clear. But what was significant is that after a long time, the art of discussion had come back to the people. As a backdrop to what was happening inside, a raging debate was going on in small groups outside the gurdwara over what the accord meant and what future it would hold. These men, young and old, who had never, perhaps, expressed themselves in public, were freely talking about the pros and cons of the agreement.

Those who opposed the accord, calling Longowal and Barnala traitors, were doing so in front of people who were wholeheartedly supporting the accord. And there did not seem to be any rancour in their voices. It appeared as if sanity was slowly returning to a state which had been caught in a turmoil for the last three years.

Hardev Singh, Anandpur Sahib

Uncertainty in Chandigarh

The city which has been at the centre of the territorial controversy feels a little uncertain about its future. The uncertainty is pronounced in those who would have to pack up their bags and go to the new capital of Haryana. The gut feeling of the inhabitants of this "city beautiful" is that the accord on its future would not suit its unique nature—that it will never be the same again.

Chandigarh's going over to Punjab not only means that the Haryana administration would have to move out, but it will also bring about a change in the city's character—a character which benefited the common man in several ways. Living in the city meant that a person had to bear a lesser burden in terms of taxes, at the same time getting all the special favours that go to a union territory.

Soon after the announcement of the accord, Harish Sood, an office-bearer of the Chandigarh Citizens' Council, decried the decision on his city and demanded that Kaushal resign his seat because he had failed to

keep his electoral promise. "He has betrayed the city," Sood said.

Yet, the overall agreement has been welcomed with sighs of relief. The inhabitants, whose city had been caught up in tug-of-war, have seen in the Sant-PM accord the first whiff of change and they don't want to be seen as nitpickers at a time when the whole country is welcoming this development. According to Gulzar Singh Sandhu, editor of *Punjabi Tribune*, whatever the feelings of the people about Chandigarh, it has to be welcomed as part of the general agreement.

Even the Haryana officials, who had chafed at any suggestion of such an agreement coming about, have welcomed it. This is perhaps because of a strong directive from the centre that the Congress(I) should not be seen to oppose the accord. Sultan Singh, president of the PCC(I), said that there was not an iota of doubt among his party members that the accord had safeguarded the interests of Haryana. The president was sure that none of his partymen would

oppose it. "You tell me their names and I will have them suspended," he said, when told that there were some members who had taken exception to the terms of the agreement.

The opposition, however, has inveighed the accord. Although the national leaders of the opposition parties had welcomed it, the state level leaders are trying their best to see that their voices of dissent are heard. Devi Lal, the Lok Dal leader called for a Haryana *bandh* and the opposition MLAs threatened to resign *en masse*. According to Virinder Singh, a Lok Dal MLA and convenor of the opposition coordination committee, the state had "lost everything and gained nothing." Even on the water issue Haryana was bound to lose, he held. The man, who had always wanted to remove the chief minister from his seat, expressed shock at what he claimed was a shoddy treatment given to the chief minister. "He (Bhajan Lal) was made to sit like a *chaprasi* in the visitor's room while the signing was going on."

The ministers of Haryana however, generally welcomed the accord at the cabinet meeting held in Chandigarh on Saturday (27 July) although there were some who were not too enthusiastic about the whole thing. Shamsar Singh Surjewala, irrigation and power minister, said in a lackadaisical manner that the agreement would benefit both Haryana and Punjab.

But the chief minister, as is his wont, was very enthusiastic. After the cabinet meeting he told reporters that the accord had been unanimously welcomed. He was sure that the interests of both Punjab and Haryana had been safeguarded. Announcing the formation of a committee which would decide about the site for Haryana's new capital, he added that they would be staying in Chandigarh for three to five years till the new capital was ready. He said that he had no problem in staying there as "brothers of Longowal", and said that a new era of amity had been launched. He extended an invitation to Longowal to visit Haryana and when a reporter reminded him that there was a time when he (Bhajan Lal) had stated that the Akali leader would not be allowed into the state, he replied smiling. "That's an old story."

Sankarshan Thakur and Hardev Singh, Chandigarh

A Sigh of Relief

The settlement has come as a respite to Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir's economy had been hit badly due to violence and uncertainty in the neighbouring state. Not many tourists have been able to reach Kashmir through Punjab during past three years. Tourists who wanted to travel to Kashmir through Punjab often gave up the idea because of fear of Sikh extremists. The union home ministry had also imposed curbs on the movements of foreigners in Punjab. People in Kashmir directly associated with trade such as hoteliers, house-boat owners, *shikarawalas*, taxi-operators, handicraft dealers and artisans have been badly affected. With Rajiv Gandhi and Harchand Singh Longowal having reached an agreement, people are hoping that this would lead to a complete and lasting peace in that state thus making way for the restoration of tourist trade. The second phase of this year's tourist season will begin with the arrival of pilgrims to Amarnath. Last year, less than 15,000 *yatris* visited the state on pilgrimage while 25,000 devotees

had come in 1983. Ruling National Conference and Congress(I) leaders as well as opposition parties which had been critical of the centre's Punjab policy have congratulated the Prime Minister for his bold initiatives. "He has once again proved to be a great politician and a courageous democrat," said former CM Dr Farooq Abdullah in a press statement congratulating Rajiv Gandhi.

People in Jammu and Kashmir are hoping that tourist traffic as well as trade which had been adversely hit would look up. But some anti-national political organisations are not happy with the development, for they have been using the Punjab problem as an excuse to preach violence against India and "to expose Indian secularism". Such elements were even predicting that the "fall" of Punjab would make way for the automatic liberation of Kashmir. Though their hopes have been belied, they are now maintaining that the accord on Punjab would not last long.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

Has Rajasthan Been Deserted?

The accord over Punjab between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Akali Dal chief Sant Harchand Singh Longowal may have serious repercussions in Rajasthan. It is not that the people are uninterested in the settlement of the Punjab problem. They do not want their own interests to be hampered. Clause nine of the agreement can easily bring chaos in Rajasthan. The major issue is the question of the sharing of the waters of river Indus which was settled 30 years ago in 1955 after an agreement between the states of undivided Punjab, Rajasthan and the centre.

As per the 1955 agreement, Rajasthan's share in the Ravi and Beas river waters was fixed at eight million acre feet (MAF) out of the total availability of 15.85 MAF. From the balance, Punjab including PEP-SU, was allocated 7.2 MAF. After the division of Punjab and the formation of Haryana, the Government of India, by a notification on 24 March 1976, ordered that both Haryana and Punjab would get 3.5 MAF water each and the balance would be given to Delhi for the drinking water supply scheme. Both the Punjab and Haryana state governments filed civil suits in the Supreme Court. Haryana wanted the court to direct the Government of India to implement the order of 24 March 1976 while Punjab wanted it to be declared *ultra vires*. While the matter was still pending in the Supreme Court, the Government of India arranged for negotiations between the states of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana and an agreement was signed by the three CMs. On 31 December 1981, an out-of-court agreement on the basis of the latest flow series, allocated 4.22 MAF to Punjab, 3.50 MAF to Haryana, 0.20 MAF to Delhi, 0.65 MAF to Jammu and Kashmir and 8.6 MAF to Rajasthan. Thus Rajasthan's share increased by 0.6 MAF on account of increased availability of waters in the rivers and the CMs agreed that until Rajasthan was in a position to utilise its full share, Punjab would be free to use Rajasthan's surplus waters. No change was, however, made in the basic formula of distribution as formulated in 1955.

But it is true that Akalis have little respect for the 1955 agreement and they have been trying hard to get the subject of allocation of water to Rajasthan also reopened. The White Paper on Punjab issued by the Government of India categorically says that though the Akalis first agreed to keep the question of Rajasthan's share away from the purview of adjudication, they later insisted on reopening the case of Rajasthan too.

The centre, which had been firm on not reopening the 1955 agreement, appears to have changed its stand to appease the Akalis, as is evident from Clause nine of the Ra-

jiv-Longowal agreement. The clause guarantees that Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan would continue to get water from the rivers Ravi-Beas not less than what they were using on 1 July 1985. The agreement also says that the claims of Punjab and Haryana regarding the shares in their remaining waters will be referred for adjudication to a tribunal. This shows that the centre has come down from its earlier stand that the question of Rajasthan's share was not negotiable. If it has not changed its stand, why has Rajasthan, whose claim was settled long ago, been mentioned in this agreement?

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

'The Interests of Rajasthan are Safe in the PM's Hands'

Rajasthan CM Harideo Joshi told SUNDAY

Q: How do you view the Punjab agreement between the PM and Akali Dal chief?

A: It is a great relief. Rajiv Gandhi has shown extraordinary skill and courage in settling a long outstanding problem which was threatening the unity of the country.

Q: But the opposition parties have said that the Punjab settlement will create serious problems for Rajasthan.

A: There is no basis for such an allegation. The peace which will prevail in Punjab will have good impact on Rajasthan too.

Q: It is alleged that the agreement undermines the question of Rajasthan's share in river waters.

A: Rajasthan's share of the river waters has never been a matter of controversy. The Punjab agreement does not tend to complicate the matter.

Q: Apprehensions in this regard emanate from Clause nine of the agreement which says that "the state of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan would continue to get the water not less than what they are using from the Ravi-Beas system as

on 1.7.85." Part two of the same clause provides for the reference of the claims for surplus water. This means that the 1955 agreement between Punjab and Rajasthan is going to be reopened.

A: No, the apprehension is baseless. I have already talked to the Prime Minister in this regard. In fact, it is the 1955 agreement which will form the basis of adjudication in which the shares of Punjab and Rajasthan have been clearly defined. The dispute to be settled now is the quantum of water to be shared by Punjab and Haryana out of the share earmarked for Punjab in 1955.

Q: What about the reference of the river water issue to a tribunal? Since Rajasthan has been mentioned in Clause nine (one), the fear is that its water will also be subjected to adjudication.

A: The share between Punjab and Rajasthan has been clearly defined several times right from 1955.

I am fully confident that Rajasthan's interests are quite safe in the PM's hands.

A Diary of Events

24 APRIL 1980 Baba Gurbachan Singh, the Nirankari leader, is shot dead outside his house in New Delhi. Four men are arrested.

9 SEPT 1981 Lala Jagat Narain, editor of *Punjab Kesari*, and a critic of the Khalistan movement, is murdered by two men on a motorcycle.

13 SEPT Warrant issued for arrest of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale but he takes refuge in a gurudwara in Mehta Chowk guarded by hundreds of his supporters.



Bhindranwale among followers: sinister development

20 SEPT Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale surrenders. His followers attack the police, who open fire, killing ten persons and injuring many.

29-30 SEPT Indian Airlines aircraft on a flight from Delhi to Srinagar hijacked to Lahore by Gajendra Singh, the Dal Khalsa leader and his four associates.

15-16 OCT Sant Bhindranwale is released. A senior civil servant associated with the Nirankari sect is shot.

29 NOV Three people die in a bomb explosion in a gurudwara in Punjab.

27 APRIL 1982 Severed heads of cattle found outside Hindu temples in Punjab. Fighting between Hindus and Sikhs breaks out. Dal Khalsa claims responsibility for the desecration, declaring that such incidents would be repeated until its demand for a ban on smoking and cigarette sales in Amritsar is conceded.

28-30 APRIL Rioting spreads to Chandigarh, Patiala and 20 other towns in Punjab. Cigarette shops are burned down and cattle slaughtered by the Sikhs. Hindus in Chandigarh tear up a copy of Sikh scriptures after entering a temple. About 600 persons are arrested.

1 MAY The Dal Khalsa and National Council of Khalistan are banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

20 AUG Grenade attack made on chief minister Darbara Singh who escapes unhurt but 30 others are injured.



Militant Sikhs demonstrating on the streets of Amritsar: violent mood

27 AUG 300 Akali activists are arrested as a precautionary measure.

11 OCT Demonstration outside Parliament House in New Delhi. Police open fire on 3,000 demonstrators who were "forcing their way into the Lok Sabha." Five die and over a hundred are injured.

12-14 OCT Thousands of Sikhs begin 'Fill-the-gaols' agitation.

15 OCT Mrs Gandhi orders the release of about 35,000 Akali agitators who had courted arrest.

OCT-NOV Swaran Singh holds talks with Akalis.

31 OCT P.C. Sethi is willing to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab but a settlement is yet to be made about Abohar and Fazilka. Mrs Gandhi says that Amritsar could be declared a holy city and no difficulty over Akali demands over river waters distribution is expected.



A map of Punjab showing Fazilka, Abohar and Chandigarh: disputed area

21 JAN 1983 After cabinet discussions with the opposition leaders, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invites the Akalis to tripartite talks.

28 JAN H.S. Longowal warns that agitation will be resumed if the demands are not met by 21 February.

20 FEB The talks which continue through February are adjourned without conclusion on 20 February.

2 MAR Akali Dal leaders unsuccessfully urge Zail Singh to resign.

25 APRIL A.S. Atwal, senior policeman, is killed outside the temple. The shooting is condemned by Longowal, but is called the "beginning of the Sikh war of independence" by Balwinder Singh Sandhu, general secretary of the banned National Council of Khalistan.

27 APRIL The Punjab Legislative Assembly Speaker rejects the resignations because they are not voluntary.

15 JUNE P.C. Sethi proposes to Longowal to resume negotiations. The government arrests hundreds of Akalis.

30 JUNE National opposition leaders' conclave evolves a formula of the settlement of the territorial issue the integration of Chandigarh into Punjab, and the compensation of Haryana.

COVER STORY

29 AUG A general strike is called by Longowal. Government offices especially in Amritsar are attacked and about 100 people injured.

10 SEPT Kulwant Singh, a Nirankari leader, is killed in Punjab.

12 SEPT Sixty policemen are injured in a Nirankari demonstration in New Delhi.

6 OCT Imposition of President's Rule in Punjab by the centre. A number of Hindu bus passengers killed by terrorists.

7 OCT Governor of Punjab, A.P. Sharma, replaced by B.D. Pande, former Governor of West Bengal. Centre recognises "the international dimension of the violence in the state."



Policemen carry away the dead body of an Akali demonstrator near Parliament House in Delhi: protest and death

11 NOV Congress(I) leader Surjan Singh who had survived three assassination attempts is killed by terrorists in Amritsar.

5 DEC P.C. Sethi appeals to Longowal and Tohra to persuade Bhindranwale to leave the Golden Temple precincts and surrender.

6 DEC Tohra rejects the requests claiming that the Golden Temple was a place of refuge.

10 JAN 1984 H.S. Longowal announces that the Akali Dal would intensify the campaign and tension escalates.

8 FEB State paralysed. Many people injured when police uses tear gas and lathis to disperse crowd. Grenades are thrown at Hindu wedding party. 2 persons are killed and six persons hurt. The *bandh* is described as a victory for moderate elements.



Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale sitting on the terrace of the Golden Temple: seat of authority

14 FEB Tripartite talks begin in New Delhi in response to Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi's offer.

15 FEB Another round of violence begins in Punjab. Curfew in Amritsar from 14 February and five other towns after clashes between Hindus and Sikhs after some Hindus attempt to impose a general strike.

23 FEB The DGP Punjab, P.S. Bhinder, and two senior advisers to Governor dismissed.

27 FEB Prakash Singh Badal arrested in New Delhi for burning copies of the Indian Constitution in protest against Article 25.

Prakash Singh Badal (holding document) about to burn Article 25 of the Constitution: defiance and desperation



They demand that Sikhism be recognised as fully distinct from Hinduism. Nine Sikh leaders are arrested for same offence in Chandigarh.

27 MARCH 1984 Ved Prakash, a Nirankari leader killed by Sikh militants in Barnala in Punjab

28 MARCH Harbans Singh Manchanda, a moderate Sikh leader is shot dead by young Sikhs in New Delhi.

31 MARCH The union government announces decision to consider the amendment of Article 25.

2 APRIL BJP leader Harbans Lal Khanna killed. Dashmesh Regiment takes responsibility for the assassination.

3 APRIL V.N. Tiwari, Congress(I) Rajya Sabha MP is shot dead. In the demonstrations by the Hindus in protest against the killing, 12 people including two policemen die. Punjab is declared a "dangerously disturbed area."



Madhu Dandavate, S.S. Barnala, Balwant Singh and R. Venkataraman during the talks on the Punjab problem: endless search

5 APRIL The government announces an ordinance amending the National Security Act (NSA) to allow detention of persons without trial for up to six months

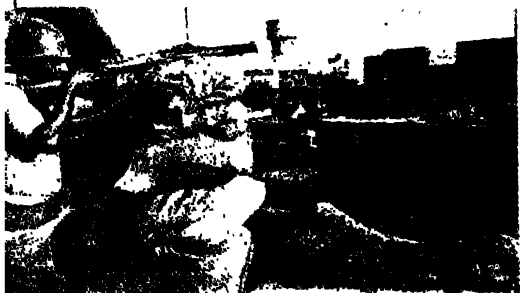
13 APRIL Longowal announces a mass demonstration in the Golden Temple protesting against the tactics of security forces. Bhindranwale calls upon Sikhs to arm themselves with grenades, bombs, rifles and even submachine guns

2 JUNE The army is called out in Punjab by the centre.

3 JUNE Statewide 36-hour curfew is imposed in Amritsar. Road and rail traffic is suspended and the Punjab-Pakistan border sealed. All news coverage is banned.

5 JUNE Militants use machine guns and mortars to attack security forces. Appeals are made to people inside to surrender and over 200 people including H.S. Longowal, G.S. Tohra, Harminder Singh Sandhu and Bibi Amarjit Kaur surrender to the armed forces.

6 JUNE The army begins assault on Golden Temple and simultaneously on 37 other Sikh shrines in Punjab. Heavy casualties suffered by the forces, under instructions to cause minimum damage to the Hari Mandir Sahib and Akal Takht.



A soldier takes aim at terrorists inside the Golden Temple at Amritsar during Operation Bluestar: costly crackdown

The Akal Takht is, however, extensively damaged before it is captured

7 JUNE The bodies of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Bhai Amrik Singh and Shubegh Singh, a major-general dismissed from the Indian army, are removed from the Golden Temple.

10 JUNE 150 Sikh soldiers in Pune desert, commandeering vehicles and move towards Bombay in the hope of seizing an aeroplane to take them to Amritsar. Most of them are stopped but some head for Gujarat where 13 are killed and others captured. At the Sikh Regimental Centre in Ramgarh, deserters kill their commander Brig Puri

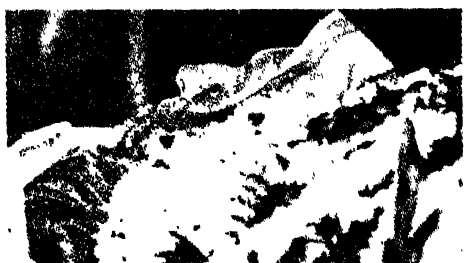
12 JUNE Akali leaders Prakash Singh Badal and Surjit Singh Barnala are arrested.

22 JULY Baba Santa Singh excommunicated by Sikh high priests for undertaking repairs of Akal Takht.

23 JULY Punjab declared a terrorist-affected area.

25 JULY A Srinagar Delhi Indian Airlines flight is hijacked to Lahore by eight armed Sikhs who threaten to blow up the plane

31 OCT Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her bodyguards Beant Singh and Satwant Singh on her way to her 1, Akbar Road office from her residence in Safdarjang Road.



The body of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi lying in state at Teen Murti Bhavan. She was assassinated by her security guards Beant and Satwant Singh: a nation stunned

1 NOV 161 people die (60 in Delhi) in nationwide violence. About 30 towns placed under curfew. Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi and 15 opposition leaders appeal to people to end the "madness." Giani Kirpal Singh denies expressing his grief over assassination. Families of the assassins rounded up.

2 NOV Toll in riots rises to over 500. Over 200 Sikhs killed in Trilokpuri, in west Delhi. Trains arrive in Delhi with dead bodies of Sikhs.

3 NOV Mrs Gandhi cremated. Death toll of the riots now over 600. Tanks move into streets of Delhi. Various peace committees are formed.

4 NOV Pakistan President Gen Zia agrees to try hijackers of IA plane. Delhi slowly returns to normal. Over 2,000 Sikhs removed to refugee camps in Delhi.

6 NOV Hunt for conspirators begins. Officers in charge of PM's security are suspended. Golden Temple Head priest, Kirpal Singh urges President Zail Singh to maintain peace and harmony.

13 NOV Lok Sabha elections announced for 24 and 27 December in the country but not in Punjab.

6 DEC Balbir Singh Sandhu, secretary general of National Council of Khalistan (NCK) found in a Pakistani training camp.

9 DEC Simranjeet Singh Mann, a former DSP, is believed to be the mastermind behind the assassination of the former Prime Minister. Rift between Longowal and Badal factions widens.

20 DEC Darbara Singh, former chief minister of Punjab accuses CIA of assassinating Mrs Gandhi.

21 DEC Anandpur Sahib Resolution on sale in Delhi.

24 DEC Rajinder Kaur of Akali Dal asks head priests of the Golden Temple to "mind their own business" and not interfere in Akali Dal politics.

14 JAN 1985 Haryana CM suggests merging Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh being looked into by centre. "Whatever is done to solve the Punjab problem will be done after consultations," says Rajiv Gandhi. Gen Vaidya claims Punjab is free of terrorists.

16 JAN Jathedar Kirpal Singh, head priest of Golden Temple, shot at near Ludhiana by assailants on motorcycle.

11 FEB Balbir Singh named main conspirator in Mrs Gandhi's assassination. The Akali Dal ad-hoc committee accuses the government of instigating the November riots.

19 FEB Rajiv Gandhi seeks the help of Akalis all and Sikhs to solve the Punjab problem. He rules out a judicial inquiry into Delhi riots as it would "harm the interests of the Sikhs."

30 MARCH Akalis insist that no talks can be held until the government lifts ban on the AISSF, releases detained Akalis and army deserters, rehabilitates riot victims, scraps special courts and orders an enquiry into the riots.

11 APRIL The centre orders a judicial probe into the Delhi riots. The ban on the AISSF is lifted. The government promises to release other leaders.

19 APRIL R.L. Bhatia, AICC(I) general secretary is seriously injured in an attack by terrorists at his residence. G.S. Tohra is released.

20 APRIL Security forces raid the Golden Temple. A pistol and a grenade are seized.

26 APRIL AISSF president Manjit Singh calls for panthic unity. Bimal Khalsa (Beant Singh's widow) and Bab a Joginder Singh attend meet in memory of those killed during Operation Bluestar.

1 MAY Baba Joginder Singh forms nine-member *ad hoc* committee to bring about panthic unity.

3 MAY Longowal denies the dissolution of the party and his appointment to the nine-member *ad hoc* committee headed by Joginder Singh.

10 MAY Forty-one die in transistor bomb explosions in Delhi, Haryana and Meerut.

11 MAY The death toll due to transistor bomb blasts rises to 79. Longowal resigns from the party presidency and decides not to join the *ad hoc* committee formed by Joginder Singh. Baba Joginder Singh announces the dissolution of the Longowal and Talwandi factions.

12 MAY A transistor-bomb factory is unearthed and three persons arrested in Delhi. Security forces arrest 250 people in Punjab.

13 MAY The FBI foils a plot by the Sikhs in USA to kill Rajiv Gandhi and Bhajan Lal.

14 MAY A plot by terrorists in USA to bomb strategic locations including a nuclear plant, bridges, hotels and government buildings is revealed by the FBI. The US government assures the PM of full protection for his trip.

18 MAY The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Bill is introduced in the Lok Sabha.

20 MAY The Lok Sabha passes the bill piloted by Asoke Sen providing death penalty to terrorists. Tohra, Badal and Longowal to stay away from the "United" meeting.

21 MAY The Amritsar unit of the AISSF passes a resolution expressing faith in Joginder Singh's leadership. Baba Kharak Singh to oversee *kar seva* for the Akal Takht.

22 MAY Resignation of Longowal as Akali Dal president is rejected by Akali Dal district jathedars from all over north India.

25 MAY Longowal urges action against Congress(I) leader S.S. Randhawa for shielding terrorists. World Sikhs Organisation plans demonstration during Rajiv Gandhi's trip to Washington.

26 MAY Longowal withdraws his resignations. Five-member SGPC committee to go into excesses on Sikhs in Ludhiana.

29 MAY International border along Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan sealed to prevent infiltration of terrorists during genocide week.

1 JUNE Genocide week begins peacefully.

2 JUNE Eleven terrorists held and arms and ammunition recovered in New Delhi.

6 JUNE Baba Joginder Singh, addressing a 10,000-strong gathering at the *panthic sammelan* at the Golden Temple asks for unity. He asks all Sikhs to carry arms and complete the struggle for justice. Beant and Satwant Singh are praised and pro-Khalistani slogans raised.

12 JUNE Over 1,000 Sikhs demonstrate outside the White House in Washington.

16 JUNE Longowal claims that he is prepared to reconsider the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

17 JUNE "United" Akali Dal drops Tohra, Longowal from the nine-member *ad hoc* committee. Longowal denies softening stand on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

Bodies of victims of the Air India crash being recovered from the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland: callous terrorism



23 JUNE Air India's "Emperor Kanishka" crashes into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland. Many Sikhs among the 326 dead.

24 JUNE The Sikh Students Federation and the Dashmesh Regiment claim responsibility for placing the bomb in the aircraft.

28 JUNE The union government orders the release of all persons detained for extremist activity since 1982, but against whom there are no charges and decides to pay Rs 20,000 to family members of each victim.

29 JUNE A four-member panel appointed by Arjun Singh to screen the list of those to be released. Longowal hails the government's amnesty move but the "United" Akali Dal calls it an eyewash.

30 JUNE Maj Gen (Retd.) Rajinder Singh Sparrow replaces S.S. Randhawa who was asked by Rajiv Gandhi to resign, as PCC(I) chief. Badal, Tohra, Balwant Singh and S.S. Barnala hold secret talks with Longowal.

1 JULY The Punjab government frees 100 detenus.

8 JULY H.S. Longowal is appointed *nomina* dictator of the Akali Dal (Longowal).

10 JULY The cockpit voice recorder of "Emperor Kanishka" is recovered.

13 JULY Longowal says that the solution to the crisis would depend on the release of party volunteers, compensation for riot victims, an inquiry into the Delhi riots and the sympathetic treatment of army volunteers.

18 JULY The Akali Dal (Longowal) expresses satisfaction over the steps taken by the government. Zail Singh urges the Sikhs to disown the terrorists.

22 JULY The Prime Minister is to meet H.S. Longowal for talks at Parliament House.

23 JULY Rajiv Gandhi and H.S. Longowal sit down for negotiations.



Rajiv Gandhi with Sant Harchand Singh Longowal: peace moves

24 JULY Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and H.S. Longowal sign accord at 5.40 pm. It is decided that Punjab will get Chandigarh and the army deserters will be rehabilitated. Parts of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution are to be referred to the Sarkaria Commission.

25 JULY Baba Joginder Singh rejects the accord and describes it a sellout. Badal and Tohra are also unhappy with the agreement. The Rajasthan government refuses to accept the river water parts of the agreement.

Fruitless Enquiries?

While the Kanishka crash is being probed, previous reports are gathering dust, says OLGA TELLIS

Last year, before he became the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi had expressed a desire to constitute an independent air safety board. He was delivering the valedictory address to the Aeronautical Society of India, in Air India's auditorium and he gave his audience a positive impression of being in favour of such a board. It was hoped that, after he became the Prime Minister, dreams would become a reality before another major disaster would strike the airlines. But this did not happen.

Since the days of the Civil Aviation Review Committee, headed by the doyen of civil aviation in India, J R D Tata in 1973, several judges of the High Courts in India in different judicial enquiries have recommended the constitution of an independent air safety board. S. Ramamrutham, former director-

general of civil aviation, heading a committee of enquiry constituted to enquire into a Boeing 737 accident in Madras also made a similar recommendation. Yet over the years, as Justice Sawant, who headed the court of enquiry into the Air India Boeing accident on 22 June 1982, observed, "the investigating machinery has at least in theory been further compromised by subordinating the position of the office investigating accidents, to those agencies and authorities whose actions are likely to be the subject matter of the investigation directly or indirectly."

In India investigation into an aircraft accident is headed by an inspector who is normally the director of air safety and who is a subordinate employee of the licencing authority, that is the director general of civil aviation (DGCA). However honest the director of air safety is, he surely

cannot be expected to expose the inadequacies, inefficiencies and cover-ups, if any, which originate from the office of the DGCA.

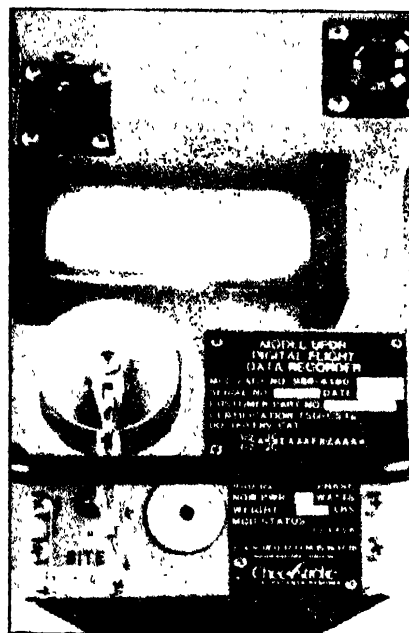
In all fairness to the director of air safety, one must also add that the financial facilities or manpower that have been made available to him are hardly adequate to keep pace with the requisite foolproof preventives of accidents and emergencies. To cite an example, the director of air safety, civil aviation department, Satinder Singh, did not even possess a valid passport to rush to Cork on the first available flight on the night of 23 June 1985 to investigate into the crash of Kanishka. His passport had expired on 14 March 1980 and it is reliably learnt that he had applied for renewal almost two years ago. Such a thing could happen only in India where the passport officer concerned was informed late on 23 June



A file photograph of the Kanishka in flight

about the crash and had to set up an emergency cell at the emigration counter at Sahar. He had to literally hunt for the key to the passport office where he had kept his stamp and seal. Valuable time was lost and Satinder Singh had to take the next flight.

The concept of a judicial enquiry, according to S. Venkateswaran, a leading lawyer who has been connected with enquiries into two air crashes, is a legacy of the British. The Britishers thought a judicial enquiry will be the only forum which will be unbiased. Unfortunately, in an investigation of a purely technical nature, an enquiry by a judge, however impartial or eminent he may be, is not likely to produce the desired results as most of the information that the judge requires is made available to him by the involved agencies. It is the manufactur-



File photograph of flight data recorder

er of the aircraft, the engineering department which maintains the aircraft and carries out periodic checks, the pilots who fly the planes, the licensing authority, and all others who are directly or indirectly involved with a flight who are likely to be booked in the case of an air crash. In the United States, the crash of an aircraft in 1972 in which Senator Cutting lost his life, brought forth the recommendation for the constitution of an independent air safety board which is to be involved in all investigations of air crashes. This was in view of a revelation that the Federal Aviation Administration was suppressing facts to save itself. Thus was born the National Transportation Safety Board, independent of

Forgotten Proposals

Justice P.S. Sawant of the Bombay High Court had headed a court of inquiry into the Air-India Boeing 707 crash at Bombay airport on 22 June 1982. His recommendations:

- Air India should exercise strict supervision over whether the pilots scan the flight instruments and give all the standard callouts and the company's mandatory callouts. During the training, emphasis should be placed on scanning the instruments and giving the callouts. Likewise during the route-checks, one of the essential checks should be whether the trainee-pilots scan the instruments and give the callouts or not.

- In order to distribute the workload in the cockpit properly, and also to meet the requirements of the operations manual, the flight engineers should be trained and assigned the duty of monitoring the standard callouts as well as the company's mandatory callouts. After introducing this practice, Air India should supervise strictly whether the flight engineers monitor the said callouts.

- Air India should introduce a suitable phraseology for a reminder callout when such reminder is to be given by a crew member other than the one whose duty is to give the callout.

A trainee manual for the training of student flight engineers should be prepared by Air India and approved by the DGCA. The DGCA should conduct examinations for the flight engineer's licence in all the subjects given in the syllabus meant for the purpose.

- Air India should prepare a list of checks to be carried out during the pre-flight check and the flight engineer should carry out the pre-flight check according to such a list.

- In the absence of a simulator, without a visual system, Air India must carry out both the six monthly proficiency checks of the pilots in actual flight and as per the format prescribed by the DGCA.

Air India should carry out proper checks for the six monthly proficiency tests of the pilots.

- Whenever there is a transfer of controls from one pilot to another, it should be made obligatory on the part of both the pilots to announce the same.

- When a pilot is undergoing route-

check, all other cockpit stations must be manned by fully licensed/qualified personnel, i.e. no other trainee crew should be scheduled for checks on the flight.

- A suitable folder/card containing details of performance, hours of flying done under check and other relevant details of the pilot-under-command-check, should always be carried by him on board the aircraft before operating the flight. The check-pilot should study the performance record of the trainee-commander so that he is aware of the trainee-commander's deficiencies.

- Air India should modify its procedure for selection of the check-pilots by introducing training on technical performance and general subjects pertaining to aviation and a qualifying written test on the said subjects.

- Air India should give its cockpit crew members a comprehensive refresher course every year both in technical performance and flight procedures on all types of aircraft flown by the said crew members and should also give its cabin crew members yearly refresher course in emergency procedures with practical demonstration. All the refresher courses for the flight crew (including executive flight crew) should be done at the training centre.

- A flight engineer, before being appointed as a check flight engineer, should undergo technical performance examination and proficiency check under the supervision of a flight engineer examiner to assess his eligibility for the post.

At each cabin crew station printed cards detailing the individual duties and responsibilities during emergencies should be provided by the operator.

- Air India should incorporate all its mandatory callouts in its flight technique manual and standing orders. It should also ensure that in future while updating its relevant documents, all instructions issued earlier are incorporated in them.

Air India should introduce a satisfactory system of receiving personal acknowledgement of the receipt of the documents with the instructions and directions which it issues from time to time, to ensure that the operating crew receives the same.

“

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the Federal Aviation Administration and directly responsible to the Senate.

In India all enquiries are governed by an Act of 1934 and an air accident investigation and enquiry, including a judicial enquiry, is carried out under the Indian aircraft rules formulated in 1937. In those years it took three days to reach London and there were no superpower jets. All over the world, countries have from time to time updated their legislation but we in India have not amended even a single legislation concerning aircrafts and their operation, according to Mr Venkiteswaran. Another laxity of the Indian procedure is the fact that it is the government who appoints the technical personnel to assist the judge and the government functions through the ministry of civil aviation with the director general being part of it.

In the case of the Kanishka enquiry, the very constitution of the court of enquiry leaves much to be desired. Justice D.N. Kripal, has in the past been closely associated with the government when he was a counsel. In addition, he was recently involved with the International Bar Association Conference in Madrid, whose regional secretary is Lalit Bhasin, the counsel for Air India since 1980. Among the five persons appointed to assist Justice Kripal, some say on the suggestion of the Prime Minister, are J.K. Mehra, a former instructor at the aircraft training establishment of Indian Airlines, Hyderabad, and who taught Rajiv Gandhi to fly and Capt. B.K. Bhasin, dy. managing director, Indian Airlines who instructed Mr Gandhi in flying the Boeing 737.

Justice P.B. Sawant, enquiring into the Air India Boeing 707 accident at Santa Cruz airport on 22 June 1982, in which many were killed and Dr Raja Ramanna were among those who had a miraculous escape, made several caustic remarks in the course of his report on the glaring breaches and violation of aircraft rules by DGCA and Air India. These lapses include the training course for flight engineers. Air India did not even provide for such basic things like a proper training manual for the flight crew.

The United States National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has its own investigators, lawyers and judges whose job is to constantly be on the vigil and every report by the NTSB is a public document. Because the personnel of the NTSB are fully trained for their jobs unlike the lawyers appearing in air accident enquiries in our country, the results



The wreckage of Kanishka floating in the Atlantic

are more authentic. The time taken for the completion of the enquiry into the accident involving a DC-10 aircraft of an American airlines in Chicago in 1982 was less than two months. In India the minimum time taken for any investigation into an accident to date has been six months. In addition, a report prepared after a lot of hard work and trouble lies with the director general of civil aviation for another six months before it sees the light of the day.

To quote Mr Venkiteswaran, "There is a tendency to produce statistics to show that the number of accidents in India are much lower than in other countries. But when one starts counting from 1970, one is reminded of the 1973 Boeing 737 accident in which the then union minister for steel and mines, Mohan Kumaramangalam, was killed. Then there was the 1976 Caravelle crash in Bombay followed by the Boeing 747 crash in 1978. Again in 1979 a Boeing crashed in Hyderabad. In 1980 a Boeing crashed in Madras and yet another HS-748 crashed in Bombay. Before the Kanishka crashed into the Atlantic, a Boeing 707 crashed in Bombay in 1982. In these accidents several hundreds lost their lives. But there are other small accidents which take place nearly every day at different airports in India which do not attract much attention. An air safety board would not only

look into the major crashes, which on an average would work out to almost once a year in India, but would also be investigating into the causes of several accidents which go unreported.

Recalling the enquiry conducted into the crash of an Air India Boeing in which he participated, Mr Venkiteswaran said that Justice M.N. Chandurkar made scathing criticism about the procedure adopted by Air India in its training of pilots, and more particularly of their system of writing the check reports. It was found that the actual observation by the examiner or check pilots with regard to the performance of a pilot was not being communicated to the director general of civil aviation. The judge also insisted on a refresher course. Despite these recommendations having been accepted, identical problems cropped up in the June 1982 Boeing 707 crash where Justice Sawant pointed out that check reports in original with all the comments were not being sent to the DGCA. He has also made similar recommendations. Unfortunately since there is no independent air safety board there is no authority to question the DGCA or Air India for its actions.

Immediately after an accident takes place, a hue and cry is raised over the need for safety awareness but this eventually dies a natural death until the next disaster strikes.

"The Government Had No Right to Dominate Us"

Mizo National Front leader Laldenga told SUNDAY

Laldenga can express himself in reasonable Hindi. Talking to someone over the phone in the midst of the interview he said: "Tu padharo, hum behtar bore hai (You please come, I am getting very bored)." Ever since he came to New Delhi in October last for a settlement of the Mizo problem, he has had only two things to do: talk to the Government

Mizoram has proved that however powerful the gun may be, it cannot suppress the convictions of a man. You can kill him but not change him. You cannot subjugate the will of the people

of India and grant interviews to the press. Both occupations have brought mixed experiences. Laldenga thinks there are sections in the bureaucracy which do not want a lasting solution to the Mizo problem and, he says, these elements have their "agents" in the press too who sabotage talks by releasing all kinds of "wild" news items. "Despite this, the progress at the talks has been good and I am satisfied," he said, sitting in his rather ordinary drawing room at 29, Mahadev Road in New Delhi. He sits here almost all the time, waiting for the agreement papers to be signed. Once known to be a firebrand, he now wants to reap the fruits of his "sobriety"—a settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution designed to project him as the "overground" chief of Mizoram. Laldenga foresees that in the interim phase prior to Mizoram's change of

status to a state he was to be the chief of the Advisory Council to the Lt Governor. Then would come the elections which he hoped to win. But all this would happen only if the present talks succeeded. But if and when it comes, will all this bring lasting peace to strife-torn Mizoram? Laldenga talked to SUNDAY on a range of issues regarding the past,

for Mizoram ..

A: The talks are not stuck anywhere. They are going ahead. We have to solve this thing about the Mizoram High Court which is not a new question as some people are saying. This proposal had been sent to the Government of India by me in 1981 and it was always under consideration. Whenever you raise a cer-



present and future of Mizoram. Excerpts:

Q: Are you finally going home now?

A: Well presently, I am waiting for my friends to come back from Mizoram so that we could sit down and talk again on the situation. But I think, yes, I am preparing to finally go back home—once this agreement is done and I hope it will be done soon. I hope they realise the importance of it.

Q: And are you happy?

A: (frowns) Let us see. I have not been home for nearly 20 years. I suppose a man is happy to be going back home after that period of time, isn't he?

Q: Where are the negotiations stuck now? You have been charged with dragging your feet and bringing up this new question of a High Court

tain area to the level of a state it has to have a High Court of its own. That is a provision of the Indian Constitution itself. The Mizo people too want a High Court and the proposal has been agreed to. The dispute is only over the seat of the High Court. We are, as the Government of India says, prepared to share the High Court with other states but it should be located in Aizawl. Most of my people cannot get justice because the High Court is so far—almost inaccessible for my people. The poor cannot spend so much money just on travel. So many women have been raped in Mizoram, so many people jailed without any cause, so many houses burnt down and so much property looted. But the people cannot get any redressal just because the High Court is so far away. We need the High Court to be there in Aizawl. But, apart from this, there are no problems, every-

CONVERSATION

thing has been sorted out

Q: *What are the terms of agreement about the Advisory Council and the status of the Chakma tribesmen?*

A: We have shelved the talks on the Chakmas because that was not a major issue in the settlement. But regarding the other thing, we have come to an agreement.

Q: *On what terms?*

A: Well, I cannot tell you that at the moment but we have resolved it

Q: *Are the final discussions on the matter over?*

A: No, the final discussion has to be done, but, basically, the questions have been sorted out.

Q: *When you had launched your agitation with the Mizo National Front nearly 20 years ago, did you imagine you would end up this way, negotiating on the table?*

A: Er I suppose so I think we believed we would end up this way. We had launched our struggle

you want. There is so much talk of nuclear disarmament these days and I say how wonderful, what nice words our leaders speak, what pious thoughts they have. But how impractical it all is. Can you live without nuclear arms today? Come to the plane of reality and tell me truly, can we afford to do so? All this talk of nuclear disarmament is a mere political stunt, the world over. Beautiful phrases and nothing more. If you talk of disarmament, why not throw away all arms? The fact is that man has manufactured arms and he cannot live without them, he cannot escape continuously improving upon their lethal qualities. This world believes in the gun. I often talk of Mao's slogan: "Political power flows through the barrel of a gun." That would always be true.

Q: *So who turned out to be mightier in Mizoram? The Government of India or you?*

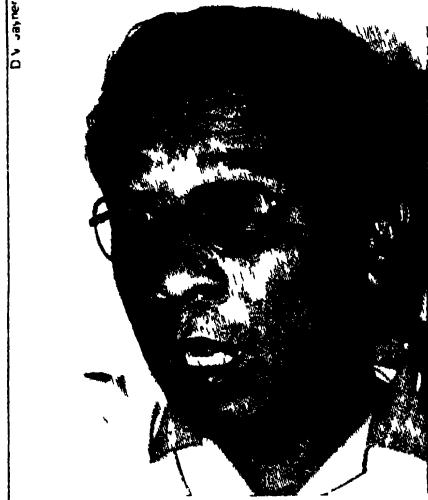
thought that with the fall of East Pakistan, they could have Mizos too. That was not to be, of course. Some years later, there were initiatives but again they failed. You know, in 1976 I was here for talks but they were mishandled by the bureaucrats. S.L. Khurana, I think, was the home secretary then and M.L. Kampani was the joint secretary, North-east. Then this S.K. Chhibber was the Lt Governor of Mizoram. But they all treated Mizoram as a law and order problem which was a twisted way of looking at things. Anyway, they demanded that we accept Mizoram as a part of India and lay down our arms as a precondition to the talks. We agreed and signed the agreement—the 1 July agreement as it is known—as one which would lead to further rounds of talks. But what these people did was to announce that the Mizos had signed an agreement and that the whole matter was over. I was



against the imposition of the Indian Constitution in the making of which the Mizo people had no representation. Any law which is imposed is a bad law. But on the very first day of our movement—1 March 1966—our party had written to Mr Gill, the then deputy commissioner of Mizoram, suggesting that we solve the problem together. We had declared our intentions of talking to the Government of India on the matter, that we always wanted to come to the negotiating table.

Q: *But, subsequently, you launched an armed, underground movement*

A: (smiles) As I see it now, it was quite an adventurous and risky affair but we could never escape the underlying theme of the present world. **might is right** You can never talk of freedom without having **might**. Be powerful and you shall have what



A: Mizoram has proved several points. It has proved that however powerful the gun may be, it cannot suppress the convictions of a man. You can kill him but not change him. You cannot subjugate the will of the people. But the Government of India has also proved that it had a bigger bunch of guns. So negotiations became necessary (laughs).

Q: *But your coming to the negotiating table, has it had anything to do with your advancing age, a weakening of will for a sustained struggle?*

A: No, no, no, no, no. It is not my age or lack of will. No, no. I still feel quite fit. But we had wanted negotiations from the very beginning, it is the Government of India that never wanted a political settlement of the matter. They thought they could subjugate the people of Mizoram. In 1970, there were moves for a settlement but the government perhaps

In this evil world a true Gandhian would be too good to survive. No, I am not a Gandhian. I believe in the policy of 'might is right.' Today, I believe, it is necessary for one to have a nuclear bomb

shocked. The agreement was only meant to have led to another round of talks for the real agreement, but look at what they did. Really scuttled it. What my information suggests is that these people thought they could arrest me since I was already in India, which they of course did. I was sent to Tihar jail. And the Mizo problem remained as it was.

Q: *Next, perhaps, you talked to Morarji Desai and I believe you had a bad experience with him too. What do you think of him?*

A: Desai was too old a man to have his own opinion. He relied too much on these bureaucrats—especially on Kampani who had become the additional secretary then. It was Kampani who propped up Brigadier Sailo against me in Mizoram, it was a Morarji-Kampani game. But at the same time, as a man Morarji Desai was fairly good, odd in behaviour but

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very frank. When I went to meet him for the first time, he did not even return my greetings. Instead, he said, "I do not trust you." He added that he did not hate me but eyed me suspiciously all the same. He is a Gandhian, he has his own manner. I do not blame him.

Q: Are you a Gandhian?

A: No.

Q: Do you have an ideology?

A: I think in this evil world a true Gandhian would be too good to survive (*laughs loudly*). No, I am not a Gandhian. I believe in the policy of 'might is right,' the survival of the fittest. Today, I believe, it is necessary for one to have a nuclear bomb. Tell me, do you think I would be sitting here in New Delhi if I had a couple of nuclear bombs? I would be ruling Mizoram (*laughs again*).

Q: And how did you find Charan Singh? Did you meet him?

A: Yes, yes, several times. But he knew nothing of the North-east. Absolutely nothing. Chaudhari Saheb just could not get it.

Q: Tell me, you had a dream of independent Mizoram. Was it real?

A: I did have that dream and if you look at the history of Mizoram, you will find that we have always been a very independent kind of people. Only the British could subjugate us. We were never an integral part of India. None of your great emperors or rajas could conquer us. Only the British could and they brought us under their political control in 1889, 95 years ago which in the history of a nation is a very small period. The British came to Mizoram by three different routes—Mandalay, Chittagong and Silchar—to conquer us and after they did, they called a conference at Calcutta perhaps in 1892 to settle the area dispute, but that conference failed. Even today, nearly 10,000 square miles of original Mizoram territory lie in Burma and a large chunk is in Bangladesh. We in India have further subdivided it into areas of Manipur, Assam and Tripura. What is now the union territory of Mizoram is only a small part of Mizoram, most of our land is in the hands of others.

Q: Have you raised this question?

A: Well...

Q: Are you going to demand the return of the land that you claim as Mizo territory?

A: Let the first settlement take place now. The struggle for our lost land will be launched later. But we will do it. That would be our second struggle.

Q: You were talking about the history of Mizoram...

A: Yes. In the Government of India Act of 1935, the Mizo people were kept under a different category. We were not under the purview of the Act of 1935. Mizo territory was designated as tribal area which was defined in the Act as a piece of land on the frontiers of India, neither Indian nor Burmese and almost independent. Even Jawaharlal Nehru said in 1946, only a year before independence, that with the independence of India the new government will enter into the same relationship with Mizoram as the British government maintained, unless the people of Mizoram choose to seek integration with India. Nobody sought integration with India, our people were not represented in the Constituent Assembly, so we fought. And here I am.

Most of my people cannot get justice because the High Court is so far—almost inaccessible for my people. The poor cannot spend so much money just on travel. So many women have been raped in Mizoram, so many people jailed without any cause, so many houses burnt down and so much property looted.

Q: Is that dream of an independent Mizoram still alive with you?

A: (*laughs*) Where is the time to dream now? But we have always been an independent nation. The Government of India had no right to dominate us like this. But they were too proud to understand this. It took them 20 years to do so or shall we say, it took us 20 years to teach them.

Q: But are you ready now for a settlement within the Indian Constitution? You no longer feel the Constitution is imposed on you?

A: The real problem now is the racial prejudice that exists in this country. India is a multiracial country but the man here is too selfish, unfortunately. He likes his own kind of people. And these racial problems are accentuated by religious differ-

ences. We have to understand that we have to live in peace together. We do not. For example, when I walk the streets in New Deih, people look at me with disdain, as if I were a lowly human being. I feel alienated. Anyone from the tribal area is an outcast. People look down upon us and it is a very bad feeling that gets into your psychology. You see, the shape of my nose is the stumbling block in India.

Q: Doubts have been raised about your popularity back home in Mizoram. It is said you are not popular, not even among a faction of the Mizo National Front...

A: That is all mischievous talk. The press has to take the blame for it. You see, they do not understand the situation and still they write about it. The Mizo National Front is not the BJP or the Lok Dal where you have defectors. People going from one party to another—BJP into Lok Dal, Lok Dal into BJP. In Mizoram, it is not a circus. We were a revolutionary party and that is serious business. One should not talk about divisions and cracks in a revolutionary party without having knowledge of things. Do you know what it could mean? Do you understand what it could mean to say that a particular man is not obeying the command of the leader? That man could get killed for no fault of his own. People say this thing about Lalrawana but I have faith in him. He will listen to me, he is a committed man. But press reports really endangered his life.

Q: Are you confident?

A: Absolutely. You have to be in a revolutionary movement.

Q: What about the elections?

A: I can tell you, I will win with a huge majority. I will show it. And even if one man in my party raises his voice against me, you can come back and tell me, 'Laldenga, you spoke a lie.'

Q: How confident are you that you will reach an agreement this time?

A: Very confident. Everything is almost done. There are some people in the bureaucracy and the press who are not interested in an agreement and are trying to sabotage it but this time, I think, they will not be successful.

Q: And how long will it be before you go back home?

A: It is hard to say. It will have to be synchronised with the time table of the Government of India but let us hope that time comes soon. I have not been home for nearly 20 years now. I have not seen my people or my land. Only sometimes from a helicopter. I hope this time I can land.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

Mystery in the Bay of Bengal

Suspicion surrounds the sudden disappearance of two ships in mid-sea

The sudden disappearance of two ships in the Bay of Bengal in June, both belonging to the same company, still remains a mystery. The two ships belonging to the Bombay-based Maini Shipping Pvt Ltd vanished from sight without sending an SOS message at about same time and place in the Bay of Bengal, off the Tamil Nadu coast. In desperation, the union ministry of shipping and transport has requested the International Maritime Investigation Bureau to investigate the case.

MV Nitya Nanak with a crew of 22 was ferrying salt from Kandla in Gujarat to Calcutta. On 20 June, at 0924 hours, after it left Colombo en route to Calcutta, Captain K.D. Puri who has 38 years of experience behind him radioed a message to the owners, "Fresh holes have developed. Water gushing in. Presently heading for Madras." The second message was radioed on 21 June at three am. "Number one hold still taking water. No pump operational. Unable to pump out. Heading for nearest port Madras." At that time the ship was located 90 miles off Trincomallee in Sri Lanka. Inquiries by SUNDAY reveal that the message was intercepted and transmitted by MV Her Rai, a vessel belonging to the Shipping Corporation of India which was plying on the same route. This confirms the owner's claim that the message was transmitted through the emergency transmitter sets. In fact, at Colombo, technicians had tried to repair the ship's transmitter and radar systems.

The owner's reply to Capt Puri's message was transmitted through the Madras station on 21 June at five pm. The message read: "Rely you'll make Calcutta direct." The reply is considered to be unusual, to say the least, because owners usually abide by the captain's decision. Given her location when she sent the message, MV Nitya Nanak should have reached Madras by 23 June, sources in the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) told SUNDAY. Asked whether the hole in the front hold had caused the ship to sink, an MMD source said that the captain seemed confident of reaching Madras where urgent repairs could have been carried out before steering for Calcutta.

He said that if the damage was serious, the ship would have given distress signals and perhaps even sought Her Rai to come to her rescue.

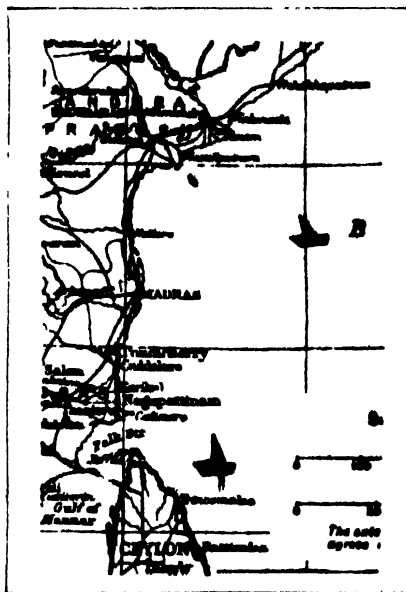
Capt Puri obviously did not find the leak alarming enough to abandon the ship, but kept silent for a long while. It was not until 26 June that the company's agents in Madras, South India Corporation contacted the local MMD office to say that the ship was missing and that a general alert should be sent out. The South India Corporation did not receive any official information about the missing ship either. The operations manager of the company, Mr Samad had come down to Madras (possibly to receive the vessel and inspect the damage) and he was informed by the agents that the ship was missing. The agents immediately wrote to the MMD considering that 22 human lives were involved, but it was extremely strange that the agents chose to leave the letter with a peon in the MMD office. Again, it was odd that the operations manager of the firm did not meet the local MMD officials.

A letter, written by the agents to the MMD dated 26 June says, "This is to inform you that we have been advised by our principals M/S Maini Shipping Private Ltd, Bombay,

that they had no contact with their above vessel (MV Nitya Nanak, No 1698) for the last four days and to approach you in this matter. The above vessel, under command of Capt K.D. Puri, sailed (sic) from Kandla for Calcutta with about 5440 mt of bulk salt. He called Colombo for replenishment and sailed for Calcutta on 18 or 19 June. However, her main radio transmitter having broken down she was keeping contact with her emergency set. The M/S Maini Shipping Company received a radio message on 22 June 1985 from the master indicating his position as 90 miles north of Trincomallee and that the ship had started making slight water in (the) number one hold. On 23 June, Captain S.A. Samad operations manager of the company arrived here to attend to the vessel. However, till date, there is no information or communication from the vessel and it was presumed that she was heading straight for Calcutta. But till now she has not reached Sandheads (Calcutta) also. As such we are concerned about the vessel and request you to send a general call from Madras radio to all vessels in the vicinity to be on (the) lookout for MV Nitya Nanak and to intimate you if she has been sighted and heard of. Similarly all coastal ports too may be alerted including (the) coast guard."

The relatives of the crew, including the captain's wife, were not informed. Mrs Puri came to know only when she went to the company's office for some money. On 29 June, Capt Maini wrote to the relatives that the ship had been diverted to Madras because of bad weather. He didn't mention that the ship ought to have reached Madras a week before.

While Nitya Nanak had given an emergency signal on 21 June stating that she had developed fresh leaks, nothing was heard of the second ship MV Nitya Ram, under Capt Sharma, and with a crew of 21 was ferrying coal from Calcutta to Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. She was supposed to reach her destination on 25 June at six am. On 27 June, the agent posted a letter to the MMD (which was received a day later) notifying the disappearance of Nitya Ram. This letter said: "We have been asked by our principals Messrs Maini Shipping



Map showing position of the ships when they were last located

SPECIAL REPORT

Private Ltd to bring the following to your attention. Their above vessel sailed from Calcutta with a full load of coal for Tuticorin on 16 June and cleared Sandheads on 17 June morning. Her last message sent to agents at Tuticorin via Madras radio was on 21 June giving her ETA (expected time of arrival) in Tuticorin at 0600 hrs on 25 June. However, since then, there is no communication from the vessel and neither has she reached Tuticorin yet. The owners have now checked with their Colombo agents and it has been confirmed that the master hasn't contacted them either via Trincomalle or Colombo radio. Hence you are requested to send a general alert through Madras radio for their vessel's whereabouts."

Immediately on receiving the letter, the MMD notified the coast guard which began search for the two ships. A number of aerial surveys were conducted and frigates employed to spot any signs of wreckage. With the epicentre at 13 degrees north and 83 degrees east, the operation covered a radius of 200 nautical miles in the Bay of Bengal. The survey lasted from 26 June to 6 July before it was finally abandoned. There was no trace of the missing ships. If the ships had sunk there

would have been ample time for the crew to make use of their life boats.

The Maini Shipping Company which was formed about ten years back owns five ships. While two are on the Indian coastline run, three are on the overseas route—essentially to the Gulf and the far east. The five cargo vessels carry salt, coal or ore. According to a report from Calicut, crewmen who had earlier worked in the ships claimed that both the vessels were not seaworthy. According to them, the Japanese ships were fit only to be sold as scrap. It seems that Nitya Nanak had sprung a leak while she was ferrying salt from Kandla to Bangladesh.

What could have happened to the ships? Firstly they may have been shipwrecked. This seems unlikely, as no wreckage was located and because neither vessel radioed SOS signals. Also that two ships belonging to the same company should be wrecked at the same time in the same region seems too strange a coincidence. The second theory is that the ships contained contraband. This implies that the ships disappeared in order to make a clandestine sale. This however, is unlikely because the company notified the authorities about the disappearance.

Moreover, it is virtually impossible to smuggle goods amidst bulk cargo. The third alternative is plausible enough, but there is no evidence to support the theory: It is possible that while claiming that the ships were lost at sea, the vessels were actually sold as scrap. According to sources, there is a thriving 'shipbreaking' industry in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. If the ships are proved to be lost at sea, insurance can be claimed. At the same time, substantial additional money can be made by selling the ships as scrap.

On 18 July, nearly a month after the ships were found missing, the director general of shipping, N. Chakraborty, ordered a "formal inquiry," into the circumstances leading to the sudden disappearance of the two ships under Section 360 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act. The inquiry will be conducted by the chief metropolitan magistrate, Bombay. However, it was very significant that the union ministry for transport and shipping has asked the London-based International Maritime Investigation Bureau to probe into the simultaneous disappearance of the two ships. Meanwhile the fate of the 44 crewmen remains unknown.

Anita Pratap, Madras



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The Press and the Prime Minister

During his press conference on 7 July Rajiv Gandhi castigated the Fourth Estate for being irresponsible. Reading the newspaper accounts of and editorial comments on that very press conference, one tends, however reluctantly, to agree with this criticism. Instead of reporting the answers and analysing these, we were fed with a surfeit of sycophantic accolades. The Prime Minister was variously described as "confident," "his usual impressive self," "in command of facts," "to the point," "precise and pithy," "witty" and what not. To those of us who watched this virtuoso performance on television, the absurdity of these descriptions defies understanding. It is important to evaluate which is the correct impression. So, let us go over some of the more important questions that were raised.

To start with, there is the question about the Emergency which, understandably, created a furore among the opposition parties. There can be no doubt that not only did Mr Gandhi endorse what was a period of national shame, but he also unabashedly declared that he would have no hesitation in declaring another Emergency, should it "become necessary." This one statement puts the lie to all the image-building campaigns to project a leader who believes in democracy and is cast in a mould different from his mother and younger brother. Quite the contrary. The atavistic instincts have been clearly exposed and Mr Gandhi's apologists will find their cover-up job extremely difficult. Thank goodness for modern technology! Not only did we hear the statement but we also saw the arrogantly, aggressive expression which spoke much more than the words. Let no one doubt that the man meant what he said. And then, in the next breath, to talk of consensus and consultation with the opposition on issues of national importance is really stretching the imagination.

If indeed further evidence of Mr Gandhi's lack of commitment to the democratic process was needed, it came with his unconvincing explanation for not giving radio and television autonomy. On the one hand he sought shelter behind the Janata government's failure to release the electronic media from governmental control. At the same time, this was actually justified on the grounds that the nation was not ready for such a

measure. You can either criticise the predecessor regime for dragging their feet or endorse their action, even though on specious grounds. But to try and have your cake and eat it too, betrays, at best, a confused mind and, at worst, a gauche attempt to obfuscate an important national issue. And to compound it further, Mr Gandhi's attack on the press as an example of the dangers of a free media merely reflects an inherited allergy to any form of criticism. Yet the image builders would have us believe in the coming of an "open-minded" and "sincere" messiah.

Then, there were the new predictable references to the Prime Minister's aim of cleansing public life and bringing efficiency into the government. It has already been reported that Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar was not given a ticket for the Maharashtra Assembly elections because of his poor reputation for probity. At that time the Congress(I) high command took credit for this bold step. Now when Mr Patil has been elevated to chief ministership, Mr Gandhi tells us that he was not given the

ticket because of an internal party misunderstanding. If so, this must have been true in the case of many others and, therefore, there was really no cleaning-up operation worth the name. Politicians are well known for their constant backtracking to cover up broken promises and tall claims, but very seldom in such a ham-handed manner.

If one is looking for a silver lining, perhaps, the Prime Minister's stand on the opposition memorandum of corruption charges against Haryana chief minister, Bhajan Lal, could be cited as an example of impartiality and determination to act even against his own partymen. This is to be welcomed and we hope this will not be another one of the young man's hasty reactions. As for Bhajan Lal, even though he is a Congress(I) chief minister—a tribe not known for its valour—to be treated like some petty tehsildar must indeed be galling to that most loyal of loyalists. The Haryana administration can now sit back and wait for the CM to tender his explanation which would be "evaluated" and then action decided



upon. This is bound to make for greater efficiency in running the affairs of the state! And now that an admirable precedent has been struck, one can expect the opposition to draw up similar chargesheets against other Congress chief ministers (and why not central ministers for who, among our politicians, does not have skeletons in his cupboard?). Biju Patnaik could make a beginning in Orissa since J.B. Patnaik has often been accused of involvement in several scandals.

In fact, it is difficult to take Rajiv Gandhi seriously on this subject for he seems to have double standards. While Bhajan Lal must explain the charges, Madhavsinh Solanki gets away with it all. Replying to a question about Mr Solanki, the Prime Minister gave the traditionally evasive answer that it was easy to make charges against people in public office, and left it at that. In respect of G.M. Shah, Mr Gandhi went a step further and unequivocally stated that his party's support to the defector government in Kashmir would continue, serious complaints of corruption and mismanagement (including reports from Governor Jagmohan) notwithstanding. How are all these different varsticks for different people to be reconciled with the 'clean' image?

In terms of promoting administrative efficiency the case of Gujarat is even more intriguing. Several hundred people had to lose their lives in the prolonged caste and communal war before the centre decided to replace the chief minister. And, pray, who is appointed in Mr Solanki's place? None other than the former home minister, who was primarily responsible for maintaining law and order. Having failed to discharge his duty, he is promoted and continues to retain the home portfolio. Yet, the Prime Minister, at his press conference states that the law and order situation is not the headache of the central government. "It is their problem and they must deal with it," he pronounced—presumably, in the best of federal traditions. But this is followed by the appointment of the peripatetic Julius Rebeiro as director general of police who, in his first public statement, confesses that he has been "sent by the centre" to sort out the law and order situation. Hard on his heels flies Yogendra Makwana, union minister of state for health. He says that he is being deputed to Ahmedabad by the Prime Minister himself "to advise and assist" the new chief minister in bringing normalcy to the state. The next day H.K. Khan, additional chief secretary, who was conducting negotiations

with the striking government employees is moved to the centre under orders from Delhi. Did you not say, Mr Prime Minister, that it was the state government's problem?

On matters of economic policy there were several similar *faux pas*. According to the Prime Minister, the earlier resource gap for the Seventh Plan had not 'just disappeared,' but was bridged after discussions with state governments who would be mobilising additional resources. This came just two days after the deputy chairman of the planning commission admitted to a gathering of leading economists that the resource constraint was serious but with "some hard decisions," resources for a plan of Rs 180,000 crores could be mobilised. Obviously, Manmohan Singh

Perhaps the media's honeymoon with our not-so-new Prime Minister is not yet over. One can only hope that the disillusionment, when it does come, will not be too late. In the meantime a thought to ponder over: If the press conference was indeed such a success why did Doordarshan not telecast it again?

had not briefed the Prime Minister nor had the latter been told of the finance minister's statement of 4 July. In an interview to a newspaper, V.P. Singh blamed the states for not having fulfilled their commitment to raise Rs 26,033 crores as their contribution to the Sixth Plan as the latest estimates indicated a figure of only Rs 19,261 crores. Clearly, the finance minister did not share Mr Gandhi's optimism about the states' capacity for resource mobilisation.

With great 'confidence' the Prime Minister told us that the first draft of the new education policy had been prepared and discussed and the final version would be placed before the nation in two months. The very next day, education ministry officials ex-

pressed their total ignorance about any such draft. This was a direct contradiction of the Prime Minister's statement. A piquant situation had developed. In a belated attempt to clarify the matter, Anand Swaroop, education secretary, issued a clarification on 9 July to say that the ministry was actually preparing a state-of-the-art report which would be ready in a few weeks. This only made matters worse and we are still left in doubt about the facts. Was this another one of Mr Gandhi's 'off-the-cuff' remarks? If so, he had better roll up his sleeves and get his facts right before informing the public of what the 'government which works faster' is actually up to.

As if all this was not enough, the *piece de resistance* of the PM's press meet came in reply to an inevitable question: where does Mr Gandhi stand in the ideological spectrum? We were taken to hitherto unfathomed depth of obscurity. Ideology was for the birds. 'Right,' 'left,' 'right-of-centre,' 'left-of-centre' *et al* were meaningless positions. It was simply a matter of what was "good for the country." Of course, the path charted by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi would be followed, but modified to present-day situations into a "dynamic package" that would take us into the 21st century. Perhaps Mr Gandhi had forgotten the economic policy resolution passed by the AICC(I) only a few months ago. At the time it was commonly said that the last-minute inclusion of the objective of socialism was plain window-dressing. This was boldly denied by spokesmen for the Congress(I). Now Mr Gandhi has dismissed the matter as being irrelevant. So what is the truth? Even on fundamental questions such as future directions for the country Rajiv Gandhi seems not only confused but incapable of applying his mind seriously, which is in stark contrast to what his propagandists would have us believe.

Having said all this one realises that these impressions do not tally with the newspaper accounts of this important press conference. Perhaps the media's honeymoon with our not-so-new Prime Minister is not yet over. One can only hope that the disillusionment, when it does come, will not be too late. In the meantime a thought to ponder over: If the press conference was indeed such a success why did Doordarshan not telecast it again? After all the Washington Press Club meeting was telecast thrice—and that too at prime time.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

POLITICS

Back to Jana Sangh?

BJP moves away from 'Gandhian Socialism'

The signs had become evident on the Ides of March itself when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president, Atal Behari Vajpayee asked the party's national executive, then meeting in Calcutta, to decide on the "fundamental question"—whether the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, as the party was known before its tenuous merger with the Janata Party in 1977, should be revived. Although the executive ruled out a return of the former nomenclature, it became clear four months later that Mr Vajpayee had but given vent to a strong undercurrent in the party for the revival of "sanghism" if not in name, at least in spirit. And it took another meeting of the national executive this time in Bhopal, to give expression to this undercurrent by spelling out that henceforth integral humanism, and not Gandhian socialism, would be the basic ideology of the BJP.

Interestingly, the term "integral humanism" had been coined by Deendayal Upadhyay, one of the scholarly pioneers of the Jana Sangh, in 1965 and had since remained as the basic creed of the party. Gandhian socialism had been adopted after the former Jana Sangh came out of the Janata Party in 1980 as a hangover of its Janata days when just about everyone thought it fashionable to swear by the tenets of Mahatma Gandhi. BJP leaders deny

that there is any basic difference between Deendayal Upadhyay's integral humanism and Gandhian socialism. They point out to a party document on economic policy published in 1980 where it is said "decentralised economy, integral humanism and Gandhian socialism are all manifestations of one and the same theme." But they fail to explain why the change was thought necessary if the concepts referred to the same manifestations.

Insiders in the party say that Deendayal Upadhyay's terminology was given the preference primarily because of its emotive appeal among the party fundamentalists, its cadre, specially to those owing allegiance to the RSS. Such people, found it repugnant that "socialism" should in any way be mentioned as the basic creed that the party was supposed to follow. It was also found to be evocative of the disastrous path on which the party had been taken, these last few years, by the liberalism of Mr Vajpayee. Such liberalism had cast shadows of doubt on the hardliners and had been one of the primary reasons for the BJP's stunted growth in the first half of the eighties.

The struggle between the liberalists and the hardliners representing the hardcore RSS had been a characteristic feature of the BJP right since 1980. Muted in the beginn-

ing, the criticism by the 'hardcore' had become increasingly strident after the Lok Sabha elections when the party had to be satisfied with merely two seats, the situation it faced when it had contested its first elections in 1952. Stung by the mounting criticism, Mr Vajpayee had offered to resign after the Lok Sabha elections, but had been asked to continue in view of the ensuing Assembly polls. However, the Assembly election results could bring only little consolation as the party was routed in the two states where it considered itself to be dominant—Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

It was against the background of such reverses and criticism that the national executive of the party had appointed a 12 member working group to study the causes of the party's decline in fortunes and suggest a plan of action for the next five years. The working group prepared and circulated an exhaustive questionnaire to the party's "prominent members" and was forced to suggest a return to the Jana Sangh ethos of "integral humanism" by the sheer magnitude of the respondents' criticisms. The plan of action has not been released by the party yet as the national executive which reviewed it in Bhopal on 19, 20 and 21 July, felt that it needed a feedback from its state and district units. But the suggestion of integral humanism has been accepted and once again the term coined by Deendayal Upadhyay, the man who guided the destiny of the party till 1966 since the death of the founder president Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, will be the beacon light for the BJP.

The working group has made several other suggestions which are in keeping with the changed scenario of the country. These pertain to steps to demonstrate the party's commitment to the scientific and technological developments, the working class, the farmers and the women. Cells to highlight the problems of the farmer and the working class (fronts on which the party, by all accounts, had done little hitherto), are to be set up. And the commitment to science and technology are to be first implemented by installing computers in the party's central and state offices. However, the BJP is aware of the "dangers" that blind pursuit to scientific advancement brings—that of alienating Man from his society and nature—and will propagate integral humanism as the magic balm to sooth highstrung nerves which modernisation is likely to cause.

S. Vijay, New Delhi

BJP leaders Murli Manohar Joshi, Nanaji Deshmukh, Ram Jethmalani, L.K. Advani and A.B. Vajpayee at the party's first public meeting in Delhi



UTTAR PRADESH

Experts in Clandestine Deals

Two Canadians allegedly smuggled out 500 kg of uranium

What were two mysterious Canadian experts doing in the prohibited areas of the Sonrai rock phosphate project in UP's Lalitpur district last May? Did they smuggle out 500 kgs of high grade uranium ore? And did the state government not take any action when the intelligence department informed it of their presence? These questions rocked the UP Assembly shortly after the start of its budget session in July and have resulted in a demand for the ouster of the N. D. Tewari ministry.

The issue had been raised by the Janata Party MLA, Harsh Vardhan, much to the discomfiture of the state industries minister, Gopinath Dixit, who kept quiet throughout the proceedings. If the allegations are proved correct, it would raise disturbing questions not only about the integrity of senior ministers and officers of the state industries department and the UP state mineral development corporation (UPSMDC), but also about the security of the country in general and its atomic projects in particular.

According to information collected by Mr Vardhan, the two Canadians, Chester Chinek and S. Srinivasan (who is of Indian origin), belonged to the firm, Metchem, and were in Sonrai to prepare a report on UPSMDC's rock phosphate project. Their work was being funded by Canadian agencies with no cost at all to the UP government or the UPSMDC. They visited the area on two or three occasions during April and May this year.

Suspicious arose as their visits and the nature of the deal between UPSMDC and Metchem were being hushed up. Not even the then district magistrate and superintendent of police in Lalitpur were officially informed of their presence. The local unit of the intelligence department learnt that they were snooping around, on its own and reported the matter to the DIG (CID) in Lucknow. A mining engineer associated with the rock phosphate project, K. N. Pande, was the first to inform them of this. He was promptly transferred to a silica project at Sankargarh near Allahabad—only adding to the suspicions. He is now wrongly being suspected of having "leaked the information" to Mr Vardhan. The DM informed the home secretary and even when the state government was

officially aware of the foreigners' presence, no action was taken.

It is uncertain as to how correct Mr Vardhan's claim that the Canadians smuggled out 500 kgs of uranium ore, is. The state's industry ministry sources admit that the experts did take something, but it was probably rock phosphate and definitely far less than 500 kgs. However, it is not farfetched to say that Canada and its allies have more than a passing interest in India's atomic energy programme, and, therefore, any information about the country's uranium deposits would be of relevance.

A uranium ore known as cafenite was found at Sonrai under the rock

phosphate layer. According to studies of samples from Sonrai's Gora, Pisanari and Tori East deposits, the uranium content of this ore is to the order of zero point one per cent which is considered relatively very high. Were the Canadians therefore, so interested in uranium that they were willing to carry out their ostensible job of preparing a report on the rock phosphate project, free?

On the day that this question was raised in the Assembly the entire opposition was unanimous in demanding the resignation of Mr Dixit on the ground of dereliction of duty. However, opposition coordination being what it is, after that transient success in embarrassing the government, there was no further concerted attempt to unearth facts and bring the guilty, if any, to book. Significantly, the government was silent even during the furore in the Assembly.

Sumir Lal, Lucknow

Mahua's Death: Mystery Deepens

A few hours after Mahua Roychoudhury, Bengal's leading screen lady, succumbed to severe burn injuries at the Calcutta Hospital and Research Centre on 22 July, the police have lodged a case of "unnatural death" with the Alipur police station (case diary number 64). The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) which had been investigating the matter at the request of the superintendent of police, 24 Parganas, K.K. Kaliya, and which had closed all enquiries following Mahua's statement to the police on 18 July, that it was an accident that caused the injuries have revised their stand and have decided to start investigations afresh.

Mahua Roychoudhury was admitted to the Calcutta Hospital and Research Centre shortly after midnight on 12 July with 90 per cent burn injuries. Mahua's husband Tilak Chakraborty told the doctors on duty that Mahua was burnt when the kerosene stove on which she was warming food, burst. In the early hours of 22 July Mahua succumbed to the injuries.

Did the police come across definite clues that necessitated the reopening of investigations? Though the director general of police insisted that there was nothing uncommon in such a stand and that what was being carried out were mere enquiries and not investigations, reliable sources in-

dicate that the CID till now have questioned more than a dozen film-stars, directors and producers. Moreover the CID is giving "extraordinary importance" to the first reports of the officer in charge of the Behala police station where it was said that Mahua's burns were not due to a stove burst. Even later, Mr Kaliya had told SUNDAY that he did not believe in the stove burst theory.

Mahua's post mortem report added substance to Mr Kaliya's suspicion. In his report to the state government, forensic expert and medico-legal officer of the Mominpur morgue, Dr Ashoke Kumar Moitra, said that there were signs of "hematoma" (clotting of blood) on the back side and on the neck of Mahua. Such clottings usually appear when one is hit with a heavy object. The report also confirmed that there was no poison in the viscera of the victim.

The police and the CID have stepped up their investigations ever since this report was submitted. Apart from questioning the relatives and friends of the actress, the police have also sent the stove and other objects seized on 13 July from Mahua's flat for forensic examination. In addition they are interrogating persons who carried out financial transactions with producers on behalf of Mahua.

High Singh, Calcutta



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EDUCATION

What Ails JIPMER?

Threat to derecognise a premier medical institute

When the Medical Council of India (MCI) recommended the derecognition of the Jawaharlal Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) in Pondicherry, there was shocked disbelief. The 21-year-old institute, which had established an enviable reputation, is plagued by a host of maladies—bureaucratic wrangles, political indifference and mind boggling red-tapism.

The reason why the MCI withdrew its recognition was that 45 posts of the teaching staff were lying vacant. At the request of the ministry of health, the MCI gave the authorities time till 30 June for the posts to be filled. But nothing happened. K. Srinivas Madhavan, president of the JIPMER students' association told SUNDAY that the MCI's decision was "unwarranted" and it clearly failed to take the overall performance of the institute and its contribution to health care and medical education into consideration.

The JIPMER authorities were unaware of the MCI's moves and first learnt of what was afoot through newspaper reports. Dr O. P. Bhargava, director of JIPMER, had initially dismissed it as "irresponsible yellow journalism." The students, however, demanded a clarification from the director and even gheraoed him. The more enterprising students also forced their way to the helipad to present a memorandum to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi when he had gone there for an election tour. The PM asked them to see him in Delhi. A delegation of students and resident doctors went to the capital in May and presented a detailed memorandum to the PM and spoke to the health ministry officials. They were of course fed on the usual bureaucratic diet of "come tomorrow," "we are

looking into it," "we shall take suitable action," "kindly submit a special report," and so on.

Unlike the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi which is autonomous, JIPMER is run by the directorate of general health services (DGHS), which comes under the jurisdiction of the health ministry. It is, in fact, the only medical institute directly controlled by the union health ministry. Actually, even the most pessimistic JIPMER student realises that JIPMER can never be derecognised because the ministry of health which is the only authority empowered to derecognise a medical institute, will not want to derecognise JIPMER when it would amount to admitting its own failures.

All the same, the students of JIPMER have condemned the attitude of the ministry. Dr A. Nandi, the general secretary of the JIPMER resident doctor's association (JRDA), told SUNDAY, "Firstly, it throws us into the bracket of unrecognised medical colleges of dubious backgrounds, JIPMER plummets from its preeminent position of the best institute of its sort in South India. Secondly, it has already begun to affect the prospects of those students who are seeking admission to post graduate courses in other institutes."

It is very true that unless the MCI recognises the institute, the medical graduates from there can neither practise in states other than Tamil Nadu, nor apply for medical courses elsewhere, without an MCI certificate testifying that the institute is recognised by it. The British Medical Council, for instance, deals with the MCI and not with the union health ministry. So the MCI, despite being a paper tiger in the eyes of the bureaucrats, can, if it chooses to, do much damage to the students who

are caught in the crossfire.

On the other hand, the MCI has been helplessly watching the deterioration in the medical standards as it is caught between the unscrupulous politicians and indifferent bureaucrats. Much of the MCI's ire today stems from the longstanding humiliation it has suffered at the hands of the ministry of health. What rankles it is that till today the ministry has never notified a derecognition recommended by the MCI. These two bodies have traditionally been at loggerheads. Raj Narain and the MCI fell apart over the issue of reservation and relaxation of eligibility conditions for the SC and ST students. Narain vetoed the MCI's objections with the result that even today there are states that admit SC and ST students with the incredible 20 per cent marks in their school leaving examination. JIPMER students fear that the MCI might take the institute as a case in point to assert that it cannot always be bypassed and ignored with compunction.

JIPMER's problem of shortage of staff is caused by its geographical location as well as red-tapism and bureaucratic stalemate. Even the simplest decisions on the institute have to be taken in Delhi. Moreover, the recruitment for JIPMER, the Maulana Azad Medical College and Lady Hardinge Medical College is made from a common pool in Delhi called the central health service (CHS). Whenever a person from the CHS is posted to Pondicherry, his first reaction invariably is to lobby in Delhi to see that he remains in the capital.

When a vacancy arises, the director of JIPMER sends a requisition to the DGHS which forwards it to the ministry after scrutiny. Then the CHS section of the ministry decides whether it is to be a UPSC or a departmental promotion committee (DPC) selection. The CHS then sends a "draft recruitment" to the UPSC following which it advertises for the post. After this interviews are held and a selection list is drawn up. The list is sent to the health ministry which sometimes sends it to the DHMS for a "technical verification." The ministry then issues an "offer of appointment" to the selected persons who can either accept it or reject it. If they accept, "an order of appointment" is issued and the candidate is asked to join the institute. Very often these candidates seek extensions for the deadline for joining the institute. Should the candidate reject the "offer of appointment" the whole exercise is gone through all over again.

Anita Pratap, Madras

JIPMER: victim of a farce



GUJARAT

Communalism to the Fore

Old problems for the new CM

Less than two weeks after Amarsinh Chaudhary was made chief minister of Gujarat, Ahmedabad witnessed yet another spell of communal violence. Trouble erupted less than 48 hours after the army's withdrawal from the city.

In an unprecedented gesture of unanimity, the Gujarat Assembly has called upon the government to "mercilessly put down communal violence at any cost." The resolution moved by the Janata party leader Chimanbhai Patel and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Dr Suresh Mehta requested the authorities to become more ruthless. Patel said, "In the past we have had occasions to complain about police behaviour. We want to assure the government and the police that we are with you in combating the evil of communalism." Echoing their sentiments, chief minister Chaudhary said that the government was determined to end communal strife. He asked the people to bear with the harsh measures being taken now by the government as there was no other option. Use of the Anti-terrorist Act passed in Parliament in May this year, a massive crackdown on anti-social elements under the National Security Act and seizure of property of all those absconding in connection with the rioting, have been planned. The government has promised to bring forward during this month, a bill to declare null and void all distress sale of land and property in the riot-hit areas by Muslims, after 19 March. The government has warned the people that it would impose a tax on people living in worst affected areas, if the situation did not improve in the next few days.

While the state's politicians have unitedly declared that the continuing strife in the border state is posing a grave danger for the country, no firm evidence is available as to why communal violence erupted on 17 July. No plausible explanation was given even by the police officials. The army had been on duty in Ahmedabad continuously since 16 April and was in charge of law and order in the walled city from 11 May. Even during the presence of troops, communal violence had broken out occasionally, the most noteworthy incidents having taken place on 20 June, the day of the *rath yatra*.

The presence of the army had only

temporarily ended the trouble between the two communities in areas like Dariyapur, Kalupur and Jamalpur. But the problems still existed. Since the early days of June, a number of crude and sophisticated bombs started exploding in the walled areas. Illegally held firearms were also being brought into the city and used during the communal clashes. The BJP has claimed that there are 7,000 unlicensed firearms in Ahmedabad but searches by the police and the army have been almost futile. This has given rise to the speculation that information about an impending search for arms was being leaked by someone in the administration to the anti-social elements.

According to a number of people, "outsiders" are behind the troubles.



Amarsinh Chaudhary: troubled times

But this, as the chief minister has himself pointed out, is too farfetched an argument. Even if outsiders had entered the city, they would still have to be sheltered by the local population. Some members of the opposition have started seeing a foreign hand, presumably that of Pakistan, in the clashes.

According to others, violence erupted because the suppressed anger and hostility of the people, which could not be expressed while the army was deployed, burst forth. The army's role could not be stretched further because, as a young officer told SUNDAY, "The army can control violence, but it cannot control the passions of the people." It is believed that there was an attempt to harass

Julio Rebeiro, the new director general of police. According to sources, the dons of Bombay financed the local *goondas* to spread communal trouble to bring disrepute to Rebeiro. This was even stated in the Gujarat Assembly by opposition members. The chief minister then said that Rebeiro was competent enough to take care of such things, although he could not say if the Bombay mafia was involved.

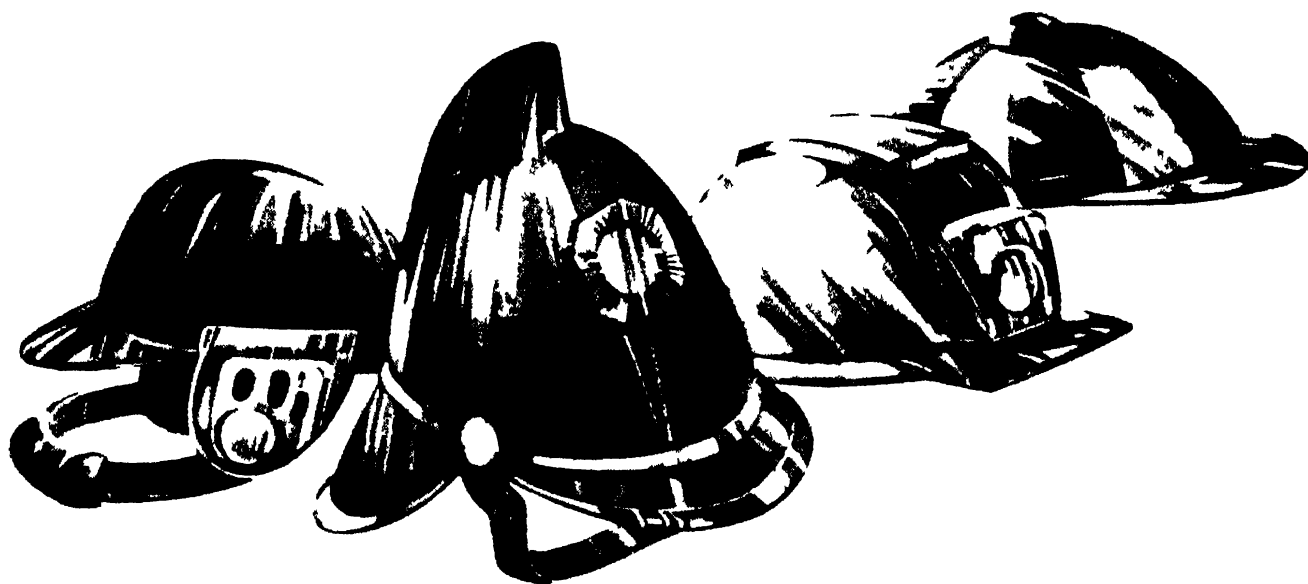
The local underworld figures do seem to be angry with the police. In the past months, the police have demolished many illicit liquor dens in the city putting scores of them out of business. More than 1,000 people had been rounded up. The crackdown had taken place 24 hours after the second Solanki ministry was sworn in in March, following the death of 24 persons by liquor poisoning in Ahmedabad. When the dens were raided and people rounded up, a large number of people became jobless. They are now getting back at the police.

Even though all the political parties have now closed their ranks behind the government, there is little doubt but no concrete proof that politicians and their lumpen supporters were involved in the communal trouble in March and April this year. In June, the government was forced to detain under the NSA, a former Congress(I) legislator, Mohammed Hussein Bareja and in the wake of the latest trouble, some more local Congress(I) leaders including two members of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. The government has invoked the Anti-terrorist Act which provides for heavy punishment to the guilty. In the second half of July, the police unearthed a factory making crude bombs within the Dudheshwar area of Ahmedabad and smashed a similar operation in Himatnagar where sophisticated devices like detonators and gelatine could be manufactured.

The sense of insecurity in Ahmedabad for the past five months has increased recently because of fresh communal violence. Although many parts of the city are no longer under curfew, roads are usually deserted in the evenings. Women too, are being attacked with knives by *goondas*. Mr Chaudhary has tackled the anti-reservation agitation rather successfully. A splinter group of the agitators has been trying to keep alive the stir but its efforts have not met with much success. The indefinite strike by government employees over the roster system has also been continuing without immediate signs of settlement.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

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Calcutta Lives

There are books which bring Pavlovian tears to the eyes or mercilessly gnaw at the conscience. But Dominique Lapierre's 500-page *City of Joy*, which remained comfortably on top of the best seller list in France in April, does both. The effect continues long after the last tear has dropped. Cheques in the hundreds have been sent to the author for the home of the children of lepers which he helps support in Calcutta. (One couple, about to marry, even asked their friends to send cheques for the home instead of giving wedding presents to them.) The book, half fact, half fiction, is the story of Anand Nagar, a slum colony in Calcutta with 60,000 inhabitants, many of them lepers. The main characters of this story (which is, above all, one of love in the large sense of the word and hope, despite the indescribable hell and misery in which it takes place) are Paul Lambert, a French priest, Max Loeb, a young American doctor, Hazari Pal, a rickshaw puller whom drought and poverty forced to migrate to the miracle city from his parched farm

land in West Bengal, and Bandona, a young Assamese nurse. These unknown people are also saints, like Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa is not a *dramatis persona* of the book, she is, however, undoubtedly its inspiration. Calcutta is, according to Lapierre, a city of saints. "In the heart of this hell I find more heroism, more love, more caring, more joy and finally, more happiness than in many cities in our rich occident. Above all I discover that this inhuman city has the magic power to fabricate saints," writes the author. (Calcutta, the bell tolls not for thee yet.)

Mellifluous and at times too smooth Lapierre's prose might be, but he has achieved a miracle: he has not described the poor and miserable from above—condescension is conspicuous by its absence. The author, who is at heart a reporter and a chronicler of the times, has succeeded in getting under the skin of his characters. For instance, the passages on the observations of Hazari Pal, the rickshaw puller, when he sees a taxi meter for the first time: "What I saw in the meter box seemed so extraordinary that I could not tear



Dominique Lapierre, popular

my eyes away—as the car moved, every five or six seconds, a new figure would appear on the meter. I could see rupees falling into the pocket of the driver. Only the god Vishwakarma could have invented such a machine. A machine which manufactured rupees and made the man who owned it richer every few seconds." Lapierre has also plunged head on into the world of lepers—no doubt shown the way by his "saints"—but his descriptions are riveting, the lepers are personages and Lapierre is a master storyteller. One of the telling incidents is about a middle-aged leper who wants to marry the wife of another leper in Anand

Nagar. When the French priest appears shocked at this trespass, the leper, Anwar, explains, quite logically, his reasons. In this world there are no rules, no religion.

Lapierre, who probably thinks in images (some of the books co-authored with Collins have been filmed) is also at his effective best when he juxtaposes Calcutta's pampered *bhadra lok* with the lepers. Max, the doctor son of a millionaire who works with the lepers, steps briefly into the world of the rich at a party in one of the 19th century mansions of a Calcutta socialite where the band alternated Gilbert and Sullivan and the American Swing Says Max. "It was deliciously retro. I expected at any moment to see the Viceroy and Vicereine of India step out of a white Rolls Royce, escorted by the Bengal Lancers." But instead of the Bengal Lancers the French priest comes to take him to the busload of lepers who had arrived for treatment. Right there in the streets, with no anaesthesia, Max amputates a limb, the leper clinging to a young sister of charity—the only pain killer available.

An Indophile's Delight

A brilliant collection of photographs, facts and features on India's many facets—scenic, cultural, economic, political and historic—*India* has been published by Media Transasia in association with Air India, specially for the Festival of India in the USA. A book that will be naturally difficult to obtain, it is the Indophile's delight, with articles on such a wide range of subjects as Varanasi, Indian dance, natural history, textiles, Carnatic music, rural Bengal, India's economic self-reliance, the green re-



volution art, cinema, the freedom struggle and a chapter on Gandhi and Nehru. Among the authors are luminaries like S Dilon Ripley, Norman Borlaug, Gita Mehta, L K

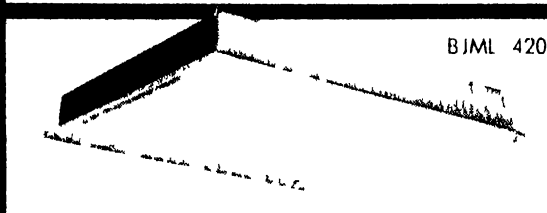
Jha, B K Nehru, Yehudi Menuhin, Pupul Jayakar and Harry Barnes, the former US ambassador to India. The book provides the American an insight into nearly everything India is, or has become, famous for—the intricate patterns of her art forms, her beautiful places and people and her rapid strides of economic and agricultural development. To the foreigner, the facts are surprising enough. "India," reads an article, "is a large country with a population of 730 million and a per capita income of the order of Rs 2,000 per year. We have about 400 million people who cannot read and write." But



there is hope yet: the book spells out plans for the spread of literacy, and boasts of an agricultural revolution of epic proportions.

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Rajani's Woes

Who do people of Bombay identify with most these days? Not Sunil Gavaskar or Padmini Kolhapure but Priya Tendulkar the pretty crusader of the TV serial *Rajani*. Whether it is a problem with the gas dealer taxi drivers or government run hospitals, Priya (as Rajani) is now the Bombaywallah's friend in need cum favourite heroine. But for all her popularity, Priya's playwright father Vijay Tendulkar will not allow her alone in a taxi. "I received a few anonymous calls at odd hours of the night from people claiming to be taxi drivers and since they had some nasty things to say, my parents decided that I should not go for shooting assignment alone in a taxi. Of course, it is not true that I faced personal harassment from taxi drivers as one evening I quoted me as

saying 'They made that all up'."

Priya is no newcomer to public adulation. She had begun her career in films as a child bride in *Ankur* and has won several awards for her performances in Marathi and Gujarati films. Priya who has even acted in a Kannada film is presently working in five Hindi films besides the popular TV serial *Rajani* for Basu Chatterjee.



Priya Tendulkar a rough ride?

Courtesy: TV & Film World

First Class Honour

Suresh Jindal is a man of many firsts. He first got Satyajit Ray to make his first Hindi film, *Shatranj ke Khilari* and then, co-produced the first big international co-production *Gandhi*. Jindal was recently made *Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Arts et Lettres*, an honour so far bestowed on very few Indians. "Why Jindal?" one would ask. It could be because *Shatranj ke Khilari* was recently shown on French television and it ran for weeks in cinema halls in Paris. But it was Attenborough's epic *Gandhi* which roused the French interest. Two of Jindal's films will be screened in the Indian film festival in October at the prestigious Georges Pompidou centre in Paris as part of the Year of India in France. *Shatranj* will feature in the Ray retrospective and Sai

Paranjpe's *Katha* in the section for women film makers. Jindal is overjoyed because France is the country of both "revolution and cinema." "After all we must not forget



Suresh Jindal a step ahead

that France gave birth to cinema. The Lumiere brothers, in fact, came to India before they went to many other countries," says this Francophile.

Cinema Laureate

Other countries have poet laureates. India has its cinema laureate. Wearing the celluloid crown these days is Shyam Benegal who, after discovering revolution in films through his sensitive portrayal of rural India in *Ankur*, *Nishant* and *Manthan*, has now been chosen



Shyam Benegal with actress Sreela Mazumdar new wave TV?

to film Jawaharlal Nehru's classic *Discovery of India* for TV. He has also been asked to direct a TV series which will reflect the giant railway organisation in a more kindly light than the continuing *Salarnama*. Benegal had earned his spurs earlier with a three hour film on *Nehru*, jointly produced by India and the USSR.

Nine Wise Men

India shows the way. In the Nineteen Eighties, nine Indian scientists were recently honoured with the US Presidential Young Investigator awards for their contribution to science and technology. The recipients: R. Chellappa, C. S. Raghavendra, Vijay Mittal, Pramod P. Khair, Gonen James P. Sethna, Subra Suresh, Chivam Jivaprakash, S. Shankara Sastry and Nitish V. Thakor will get grants of upto 100,000 dollars each. They all belong to American universities where they

have been researching and share an interest in present day needs and possibilities. Sastry for instance is in the process of adapting robotics to fire fighting systems, deep sea prospecting, waste disposal and monitoring and the microelectronics industry.

"I am interested in the pragmatic aspects of machine intelligence," he says. Asked if a robot could be designed and programmed to inspect hazardous industrial plants like the one at Bhopal, he said, "Absolutely." N.V. Thakor is working on a portable mic-

rocomputer system to monitor cardiac patients. His other project involves analysing and mapping brain signals through the EEG in order to draw out

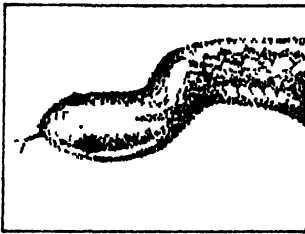
a map of the electrical activity in the human brain. The scientists were honoured by the National Science Foundation, USA.

Dr S. Shankara Sastry (right) at work proud honour



Outwitting them All

Some male garter-snakes impersonate their female counterparts to distract amorous rivals, according to two zoologists of the University of Texas, USA. They said the ploy—which is known as female mimicry and has been noted in other species, mainly fish—was probably a way of gaining better access to the female reptiles. At garter snake mating time, one female may draw from ten to 100 males into a slithering tangle of snakes. No matter how big the mating ball, as it is called, only one male succeeds in drawing the female's attention. The zoologists, Robert T. Mason and David Crews, discovered that 14 per cent of garter-snake mating balls had no female snake but instead had one male that was producing the female pheromone, a substance which attracts the male snakes. They found that when these impersonators, which they dubbed "she males," were present, they distracted the other males and had a better chance of mating with the real female reptile.



Exploding the Myth

The full moon has been considered from ancient times to be a cause of lunacy and an incitement to lunatic behaviour. However, Nicholas Sanduleak, an astronomer at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, refutes this theory. To back his claim, he has cited data on homicidal assaults ranging over a period of ten years. He says that day to day fluctuations in the assault rate do not show any correlation with the lunar cycle. Arnold Lieber, an advocate of the old theory, asserts that moon linked "biological ties" influence emotions. If this were true, the most marked effect would be observed when the moon's tidal pull is reinforced by the sun's, but even then, there is no correlation with the assault rate, writes Sanduleak in *The Skeptical Inquirer*, a journal on paranormal phenomena. However, he did confirm that homicidal assaults were much more likely on weekends and during the months of July and August.

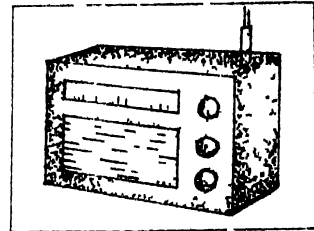
The Olfactory Connection

Researchers at the Institute of Dermatology in England have found a common link between sweaty feet and cheese: they have detected that the odour emitted by both are similar because of the presence of certain organisms. While smelly feet are infected with an organism called *brevibacterium epidermisi*, its close cousin, *brevibacterium lineus*, is added to milk during cheese making. Moisture is the clue to the smell in both cases. The former thrives on the proteins in the skin in damp conditions and the latter feeds on milk proteins for its sustenance. The byproduct of these processes is a chemical methanethiol and that is what is responsible for the distinctive smell, they say.



Circuiting Radio Static

Disturbances over the radio can be very irritating for the ear. Very often FM (frequency modulation) signals also fade in and out while one is listening to his or her favourite station. Parsec Electronics (USA) has come out with a new amplifier or antenna which will bring music without these disturbances. It is a slender looking obelisk shaped Italian import and thwarts the wayward signals effectively. Besides having a built in amplifier to boost radio frequencies it also has a special computer chip designed by Piergiorgio Radaelli, an electronic engineer from Milan. This computer solves the complex jumbling created by a broadcast phenomenon known as multipathing, which happens when a station's signals bounce off buildings, mountains, the ionosphere and even water.



Closing in on Insects

Scientists have developed a system that can detect Caribbean fruit fly larvae in grapefruit, loquat, guava and papaya without damaging the fruit. The system amplifies and broadcasts the noises made by the chewing larvae. Dr J. C. Webb, who devised the system, said it was so sensitive that it could detect a single day old larva of the maggot in a grapefruit.

Traumas Can Cause Migraine

Dr Joseph Blau, a British neurologist, has proposed a new theory on the cause of migraine attacks. He wondered why individuals who suffer from migraine, do not usually get their first attack till the age of ten, if not 30. Now he believes that individuals with a family history of the disease, stay migraine free until a traumatic event initiates the first attack. From then on, attacks can be sparked off by small things such as excitement or skipping a meal.

Keeping Tabs on Pollution

In England a helium filled balloon floating 40 kms above the earth has recently lowered a package of instruments into rarified gases of the stratosphere to measure the concentration of the ozone layer. The equipment was suspended on a 12 km long cable made of a filament of kevlar. It was lowered for periods of three and a half hours before being reeled in. Such forays are intended to help unravel the factors that influence the complex series of chemical reactions in the ozone layer. This layer prevents the damaging levels of ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth's surface. But the invasion of man-made material into the stratosphere is feared to have denuded the ozone layer.



VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 4 AUGUST 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is not a good week and you should be circumspect in all your dealing. Professionals should avoid arguments with their superiors while businessmen should deal with their customers diplomatically. Keep a strict watch on your health and diet as there are chances that you may suddenly fall ill. Your financial prospects are not all that bright. Avoid pleasure trips this week.
Good dates 4, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction North-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Professionals, especially those employed in the government sector, will benefit from the lucky phase. This is also a good period for academics and businessmen do not waste the opportunities that come your way. Do not hesitate to seek favours from influential persons. However, your financial prospects are not very bright. Avoid speculation.
Good dates 8 and 9
Lucky numbers 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction South



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This week has a lot of excitement in store for sportsmen; rare honours will come your way. This is a good week for love and matrimonial alliances. It is also favourable for those in service; a promotion cannot be ruled out. However, businessmen should refrain from taking hasty decisions. The weekend will keep you busy with social engagements.
Good dates 5, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) If you intend to get married, this is the opportune time. Sportsmen will come out with flying colours in competitions. Your financial prospects will soar; some of you may gain money through unexpected sources. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. You will be united with a long lost friend. A pleasure trip is in the offing.
Good dates 6, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction North



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Domestic problems will bother you but with a bit of tact you can overcome them. Professionals are warned not to get into unnecessary arguments with their superiors. However, the phase is good for businessmen; some of you will bag lucrative deals. This is also a good week for marriage negotiations.
Good dates 5, 6 and 7
Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 7
Favourable direction South-east



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is not a good week for lovers; avoid arguments and misunderstandings with your beloved. The stars do not shine very brightly on the financial front. On the domestic front, someone may suddenly fall sick, adding to your worries. Avoid undertaking pleasure trips this week. Businessmen should guard against deception.
Good dates 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) If you are in love and willing to get married, this is the opportune time. Prospects are also bright for businessmen and professionals. Artists and sportsmen are likely to win rare honours. The domestic front will remain inspiring. However, avoid unnecessary arguments. You will be busy with social engagements but do not overstrain yourself.
Good dates 5, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers 1, 5 and 9
Favourable direction North-east



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is not a good week for professionals who will come in for severe criticism from their employers. Businessmen should be careful while dealing with their customers. However, lovers and those intending to get married will find this period favourable. Disputes regarding property will be resolved in your favour. A pleasure trip is in the offing.
Good dates 7, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 6
Favourable direction South-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is an extremely good phase for lovers to realise their marriage plans. Businessmen should check all documents before finalising deals. Professionals are likely to be criticised by their employers. Your health will add to your worries. Things are not all that bright on the homefront. A letter will bring pleasant surprises towards the weekend.
Good dates 5, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers 1, 5 and 9
Favourable direction North



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) A favourable week for romance. On the professional front, things will brighten up. Those hoping for a promotion will get it. But be careful in dealing with your superiors or those in authority. Guard against deception. Your family life will be peaceful. Towards the end of the week, there will be a pleasant surprise. Children will do well in studies.
Good dates 4, 6 and 7
Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction East



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This week you will be under a lot of financial pressure. So relax and try to take it easy. Exercise caution in all your dealings. You should be tight-fisted in financial affairs. Be prepared for delays and obstacles that may hinder progress. You may fall ill. One of your near ones may be indisposed and you will incur heavy expenses on that account.
Good dates 5, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers 1, 4 and 5
Favourable direction West

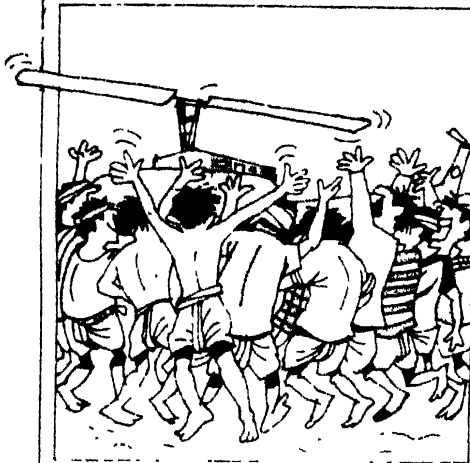


PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is not a good week for lovers. The professional front is also discouraging; some of you may have to quit your jobs. Enemies will be active during this phase. However, some of you will gain money through inheritance. A pleasure trip towards the end of the week will prove financially profitable. Jobs are in the offing for those unemployed.
Good dates 4, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction South

For those born between 15 August to 14 September:

You exude royal dignity and high spirits in your manner and outward appearance. A pleasant and radiating joy of life revolves around your whole existence. People born during this period always hanker for the company of aristocrats and elites and have a great desire to occupy a prominent place among them. You are occasionally moody and difficult to cope with. However, your good mood is characterised by hearty joyousness and regal hospitality. Sometimes you can be exceedingly possessive and susceptible to flattery. You are essentially of a generous bent of mind and often shower lavish gifts on your friends and relatives.

THIS INDIA



BELGAUM: Mistaken identities can sometimes cause pleasant surprises. And so it happened in the taluk headquarters town of Gadhinglaj, across the Karnataka border in Maharashtra, when the pilot mistook the town for Sankeswar where he was to land his helicopter. More surprising was the fact that the chief minister of Karnataka, Ramakrishna Hegde and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. T. Rama Rao, should alight from the aircraft. Hundreds of people rushed to meet the VIPs. Both the chief ministers, unaware that they had landed at the wrong place, were pleasantly surprised at the sight of the cheering crowds. It took about ten minutes for the VIP party to fly back to Sankeswar after obtaining directions. The CMs attended the silver jubilee function of a cooperative sugar factory—*The Hindu* (G.S. Murthy, Bangalore)

TRIVANDRUM: The magistrate sits on a chair placed over a kitchen's cooking slab and the lawyers on wooden planks used for cutting vegetables. Exhibits connected with cases are piled up in the lavatory. This is the plight of the magistrate's court in Varkala, described as a "kitchen court" by Varkala Radhakrishnan CPI-M MLA in the Kerala Assembly recently. The home minister Vyalar Ravi, admitted that the court had a space problem as it was in an outhouse but added that steps were being taken to construct a new building for the court—*The Statesman* (Arun Gupta, Calcutta)

HYDERABAD Junior doctors at the Gandhi Hospital here dispensed with their stethoscopes for sometime, and took to broomsticks to register a novel protest in support of their demands.

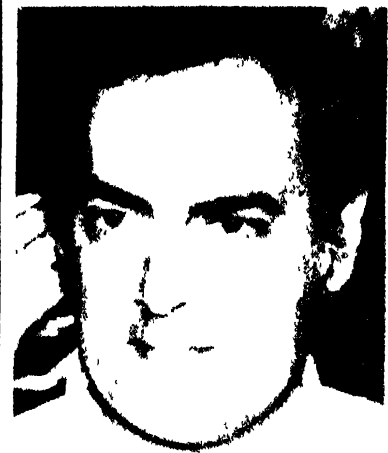
About 100 junior doctors swept the floors of the hospital premises taking senior doctors and the hospital staff by surprise. They were protesting against their being treated on par with the class four employees in the state. The government's offer to raise the stipend from Rs 500 to Rs 550 was "nothing but treating the honoured medical profession on a lesser footing than the class four employees," a spokesman for the House Surgeons' Association said—*The Deccan Herald* (M. R. Jaya Prakash, Bangalore)

MANGALORE: An invitee to a marriage at a temple in Mangalore ended up marrying the bride, while a police sub-inspector who came to arrest the would-be bridegroom performed the *kanyadaan*. The bridegroom did not turn up at the scheduled auspicious hour fearing arrest, as he was already married and had two children. His first wife, on learning about his plans to marry again, lodged a complaint with the police. Sub-inspector Santappa who reached the marriage venue to arrest the groom performed the rites when 30-year-old Taranath offered to marry the bride—*The Economic Times* (Suresh Namboodiri, Patna)

TIRUCHI: A novel demonstration was held by the Tiruchi District Consumers Council recently, to highlight the plight of two-wheeler users who are unable to comply with the directive of the government to wear crash helmets in view of their shortage. Also protesting against the alleged police harassment of the helmet-rule violators, about ten members of the council "wore" mud pots on their heads. Mr V. Muthuvelan, president of the council, said that helmet dealers were quoting fancy prices for the helmets and pointed out that the government should take a pragmatic attitude while imposing this rule—*Indian Express* (B. Meenakshi Sundaram, Trichy)

REWARI: It seems that the examination branch of Maharshi Dayanand University makes no distinction between biology and mathematics. It has preferred to write mathematics instead of biology on a certificate recently awarded to Anju Chodhary, a student of Government College, Gurgaon who appeared in the pre-medical examination of MDU in April. Her roll number was 43851. The university's inefficient functioning is evident from the fact that the MDU staff thoroughly checked the certificate before despatching it—*The Tribune* (S.S. Jasswal, Patiala)

WITHOUT COMMENT



If the opposition is so friendly with the Akalis, why don't they ask the Akalis to dilute the Anandpur Sahib Resolution with in the framework of the Constitution so that the problem can be resolved?—Rajiv Gandhi, during his electoral campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, quoted in *Business Standard*

The period of confrontation is over—Sant Longowal, after signing the Punjab accord in *The Times of India*

We pray that from today the history of Punjab will once again be written in gold, not in blood—Editorial in *The Telegraph*, after the signing of the Punjab accord

The fact that there has been a settlement is in itself a great relief. I am happy about it—L. K. Advani in *The Hindustan Times*

Longowal has sold the pure blood of the Khalsa to the government. The Sikh panth will have to throw him out of its fold—An AISSE member, on the Punjab accord in *The Telegraph*

Haryana was not even consulted and it has now become the *hali ka bakra* (sacrificial goat)—Lok Dal chief Devi Lal, quoted in *The Telegraph*, criticising the Punjab accord

This is a victory for all—*Indian Express*

Great injustice has been done to Haryana—Dr Mangal Sein, BJP leader of Haryana in *The Hindustan Times*

VARIETY

CHESS

One of the most frustrating aspects of chess is that it is so difficult to win a game, yet so easy to lose one. Whereas a sustained attack requiring extensive calculations and ingenious combinations may in the long run ultimately prove insufficient, the simplest and seemingly most trivial endgame disadvantage can be decisive.

The following is an example of deceptive simplicity. Though many of Larsen's games are mind-bogglingly complex, he is in fact in his element in simple positions, as his opponent soon learns.

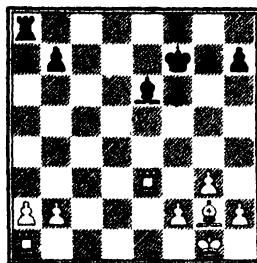
White: B. Larsen. Black: A. Jusupov
Queen's Gambit - Catalan System.
Reykjavik 1985.

1 P-QB4 N-KB3 2 N-QB3 P-B4
3 P-KN3 P-K3 4 N-B3 P-Q4
5 PxP NxB 6 B-N2 N-QB3
7 O-O B-K2 8 NxN PxN
9 P-Q4 O-O 10 PxP BxP

This mutant Tarrasch Defence (one pair of knights having been exchanged) has been both popular and successful in recent years.

11 B-N5 P-B3 12 B-Q2 B-K3

Jusupov (Black)



Larsen (White) to move

13 P-K3

Hardly the sort of a move to put the fear of god into his opponent, but the prospect of White establishing the blockade with B-B3 is sufficient to induce Jusupov to take what appears to be the easy route to equality.

13... P-Q5 14 PxP NxB

15 B-K3! NxN+ 16 QxN Q-N3
17 KR-K1 BxB 18 QxB QxQ
19 RxQ K-B2

DIAGRAM

20 P-N3!

Without even a preliminary clap of thunder Black suddenly finds he is lost, the QNP being indefensible. If 20...QR-N1 21 QR-K1 KR-K1 22 RxR RxR 23 B-Q5 R-K1 24 P-KN4! P-KN3 25 K-N2 P-B4 26 P-N5 with a perpetual pin.

20... QR-K1 21 QR-K1 B-Q2

Or 21... P-QN3 22 RxR winning as above.

22 B-Q5+ K-N3 23 BxP RdxR
24 RxR R-QN1 25 B-R6 R-N3
26 B-B4 P-QR4 27 P-QR4 R-Q3
28 K-B1 R-Q7 29 K-K1 R-OE
30 R-Q3 RxR 31 BxR+ K-B2
32 K-Q2 P-KR3 33 K-B3 K-K3
34 P-QN4 BxP 35 PxP K-Q3
36 K-Q4 B-B3 37 P R6 Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

There is no end to the variations of loser-on-loser play. This deal is from the Welsh International Masters event.

Dealer East Game all

♠ 3
♥ A 10 9 8 6 2
♦ A Q 4
♣ K 9 5

♠ Q J 4 2
♥ 4
♦ 10 8 6
♣ J 10 4 3 2

N E
W S

♠ 8 6 5
♥ K Q J 7 5
♦ J 9
♣ A Q 8

♠ A K 10 9 7
♥ 3
♦ K 7 5 3 2
♣ 7 6

At a table where Robert Upton was North and Patrick Jourdain South, East opened One Heart and South overcalled with Two Hearts, indicating spades and a minor. North might have bid 3NT, but the partnership ended in Four Diamonds.

West led his singleton heart, won in dummy. South can begin with ace of hearts, ace of spades and a spade ruff, but then he is not well placed. Jourdain made the fine play of ♥ 10, discarding a club from hand. After a diamond from East and another heart the position was:

♠ 3
♥ 8 6 2
♦ A 4
♣ K 9 5

♠ Q J 4 2
♥ —
♦ 10 8
♣ J 10 4

N E
W S

♠ 8 6 5
♥ K 7
♦ 9
♣ A Q 8

♠ A K 10 9 7
♥ —
♦ K 7 5 3
♣ —

East has no good play now. If he leads a spade or a diamond, South can take the spade ruff and regain the lead by ruffing a club. If East leads a low heart, South discards a spade and dummy's sixth heart comes into the action.

Other players in a diamond contract had the idea of discarding a club on a heart - but they all did it *after* they had taken the spade ruff. The difference is that the sixth heart is no longer a threat.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. Tethys, Dione, Rhea and Iapetus are moons of the planet Saturn. Who first discovered them?
2. Which is the largest mosque in the world?
3. Which well-known geographer wrote the book, *The Origin of Continents and Oceans*?
4. What do the initials DNA stand for?
5. Where in India is the Jaldapara wildlife sanctuary?
6. Who is a Caliban?
7. Name the circular assemblage of stones in Salisbury plain in England which was constructed more than 3,500 years ago and used either for astronomical or religious purposes.

8. With which British scientist is the discovery of electromagnetic induction associated?
9. Where was Emperor Ranjit Singh's capital?
10. What is a bear garden?
11. What do the following have in common: Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin?
12. What is a kelpie?
13. The film *Alam Ara* was the first talkie made in India. Who directed it?
14. Who, in Greek mythology, had a hundred eyes?
15. When was the Postal Index Number (PIN) code introduced by the Post and Telegraphs department in India?

15. 15 August 1972.
14. Argus.
13. Ardeshir Iran.
12. A spirit of the waters which takes the form of a horse.
11. They were all anarchist philosophers.
10. A place full of noise and confusion.
9. Lahore.
8. Michael Faraday.
7. Stonehenge.
6. A rude and uncouth person.
5. West Bengal.
4. Deoxyribonucleic acid.
3. Alfred Wegener.
2. The Jama Masjid in New Delhi.
1. Giovanni Cassini.

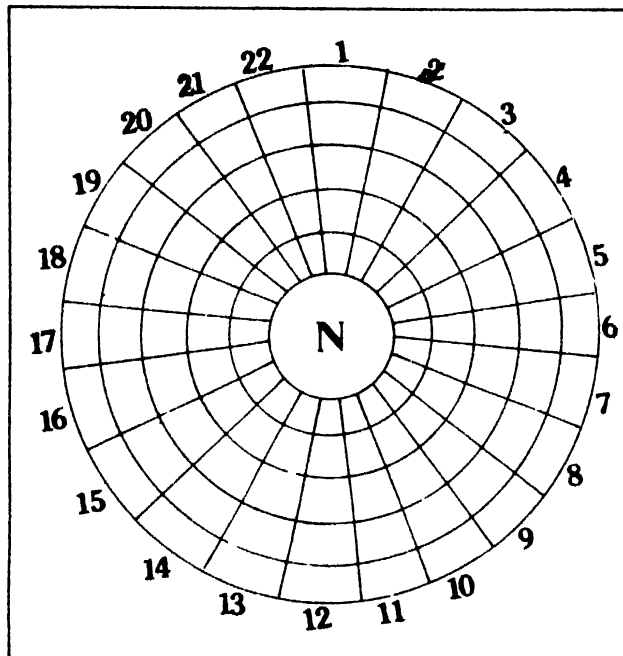
ANSWERS

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Word Wheel

Answers to the clues (1—22) are all six letter words and go into the radial spaces under the appropriate number. When you have finished the outer circle of letters it will give you the answer to the hidden message. Can you say what this is?



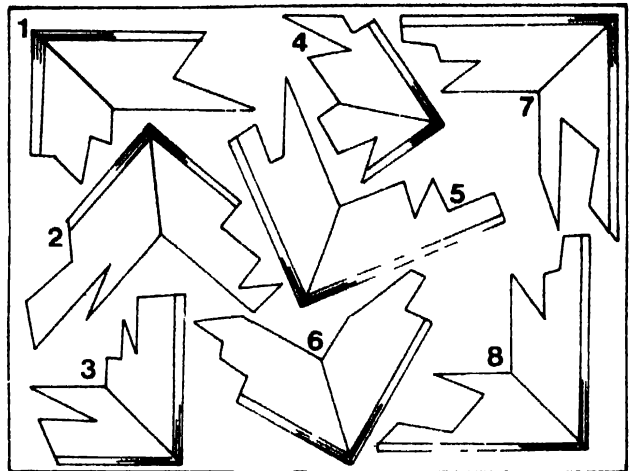
Clues

- 1 Season
 - 2 Planet
 - 3 Red gold
 - 4 Innate
 - 5 Name for some coins
 - 6 Box
 - 7 Where we would all like to go
 - 8 What we are
 - 9 Small square of linen
 - 10 Obsolete saw
 - 11 Resident surgeon or physician
 - 12 Religious sect
 - 13 Inventor of electric bulb
 - 14 Line of descent
 - 15 Behaviour
 - 16 Faculty of sight
 - 17 Number
 - 18 Popular Western name
 - 19 Country
 - 20 Prepare to depart
 - 21 Japanese for Japanese
 - 22 Regimental flag
- Hidden Message: Advice we would do well to take

Quick Think

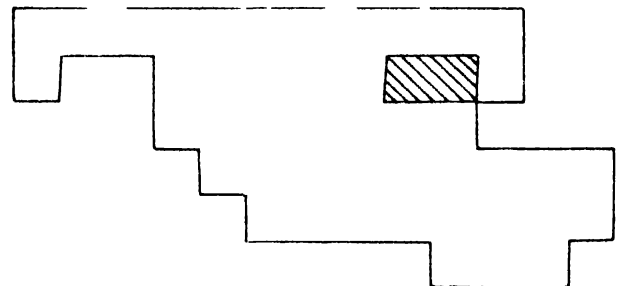
What everyday word in the English language is generally pronounced incorrectly?

Figure it Out



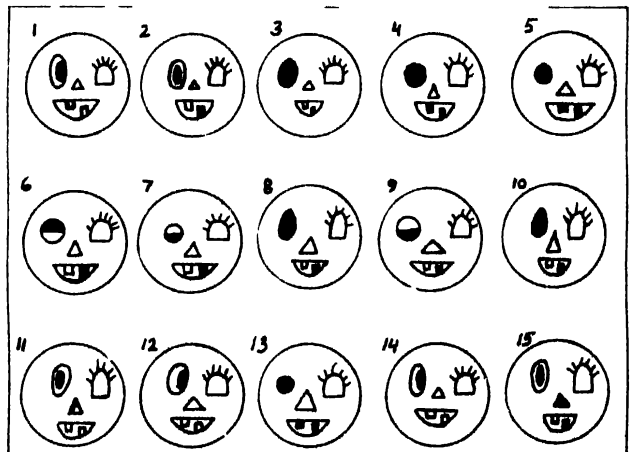
Here is a square frame that has been dismembered. Can you reassemble it? A word of warning: there are pieces of another object mixed up with the bits of frame!

Shape Sleuth



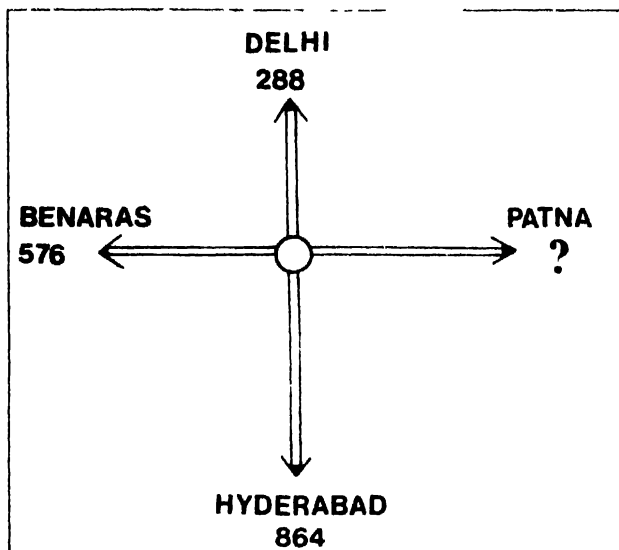
Can you tile this floor area using 15 tiles of the same shape? The floor must be completely covered.

Seeing Double



Only two of the 15 masks shown here are perfectly identical. How long does it take you to spot which these are?

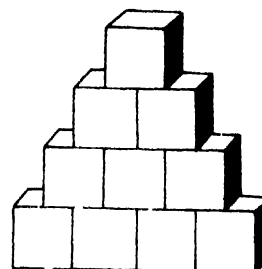
Witsharpener



Alas, geography is not our strong point if these distances are to be believed. But we assure you there is a

logical reason for them. Following our logic, can you work out the distance to Patna? Here's a clue. If you look carefully, you will find there is an extra easy way of finding it.

Blockbuster



RNNABEOLDT

Fill in the ten letters given above into the squares of the blank pyramid so that these form eight four letter words reading downwards.

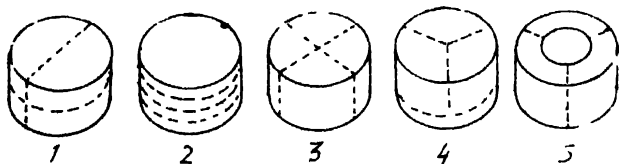
Solutions to last week's Teasers

Personality Plus. Mohammed Ali Jinnah

Missing Links: Two series 1, 2, 3, 4 and 3, 5, 7, 9 combine to form this series. Therefore the complete series will be 1, 3, 2, 5, 3, 7, 4, 9, 5, 11, 6, 13

Blankagrams TOWN, TORN, IORE, TOTL, COTE, CITE, CITY

Witsharpener: The first four diagrams are common enough. In the 5th diagram, the radius of the central column should be half the radius of the full cake. Then the volume of that piece is $\frac{1}{2} \pi r^2 l$ which is $\frac{1}{4} \pi r^2 l$. The remaining annulus (or rings) can easily be cut into further three equal pieces making each of them a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole.

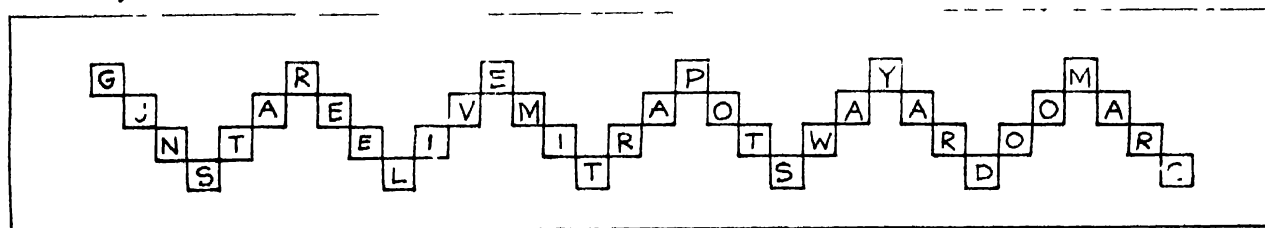


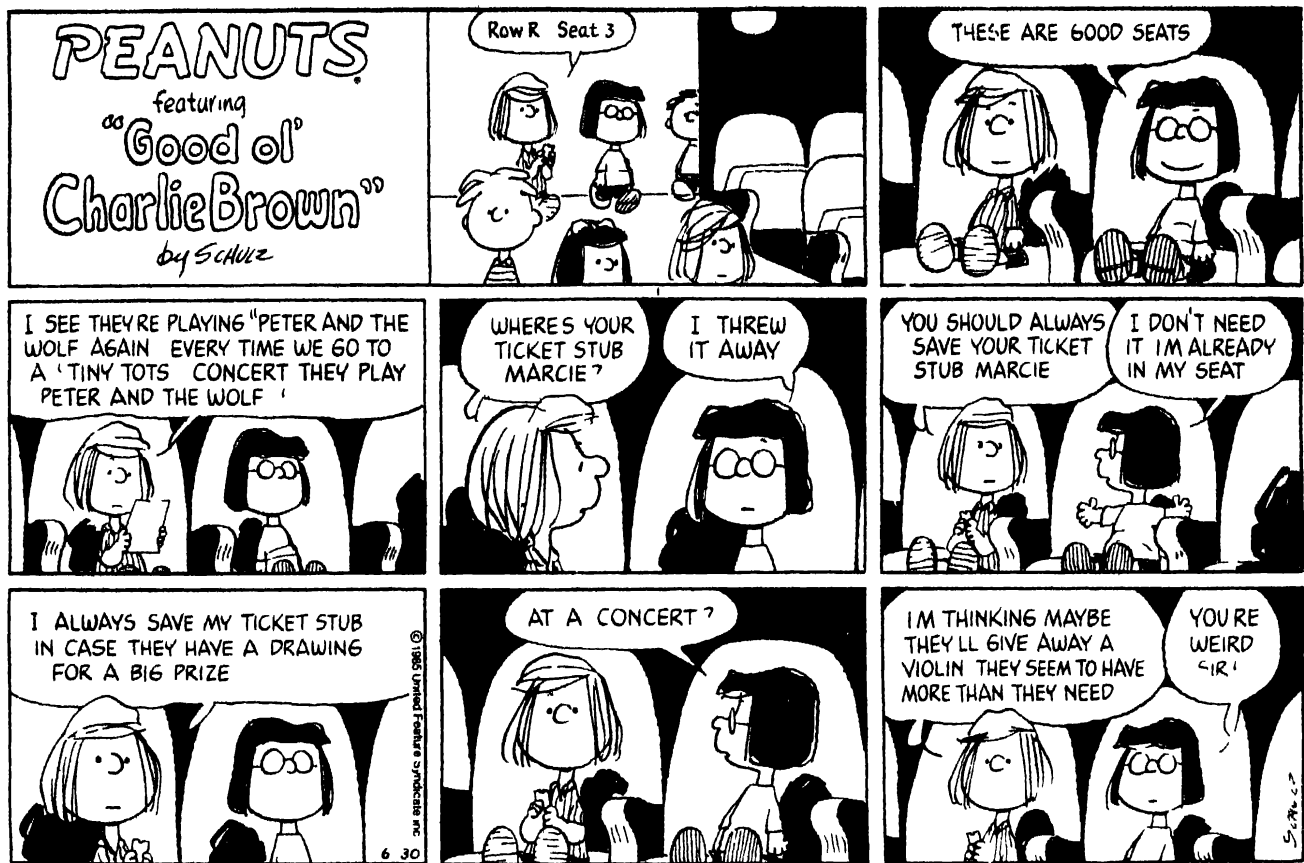
Quizzbizz: The words are Elizabeth, Mallika, Roberta, Bulge, Clementine. Bulge is the odd one out.

What's in a Word: I temperature, II scales

Shape Sleuth: 56 triangles and 93 quadrilaterals. As a further exercise in mind-boggling, perhaps the readers may like to count the number of pentagons and hexagons in the figure and let us know.

Word Play:





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GM-PH-85

Deepthi Naval is feeling down and out these days. After her much acclaimed performance in *Kamla* and *Ankahee* she had expected to be deluged by offers from good filmmakers. In fact, she had been nominated the best actress for the prestigious National Awards, and it is rumoured that Shabana Azmi beat her to it by just one vote in the final tally. Now, she has to contend with being a runner-up. Also, the roles that she has been offered have done little to boost her sagging morale. "They are all the same—second-rate roles in second-rate films. I will wait for some time and if nothing interesting comes by, I will have to do some rethinking about my career," she says.

Dev Anand's omnipresent optimism has been slightly eroded. The reason: distributors are fighting shy of his latest venture *Hum Naujawan*. It



Deepthi Naval: unrewarding roles

is all the more distressing because the film is supposed to be one of the better movies made by Dev in recent times. Not only is it well made but the film features some good acting by the newcomers who have acted in it—especially the beautiful Richa Sharma, Dev's new find from the US. "It certainly is the best film directed by Dev Anand so far," says an insider who is known for his harsh criticism of Dev's works. Once Navketan, Dev's banner was a favourite with the distributors but much of its credibility was lost when *Swami Dada* and *Anand aur Anand* flopped. But Dev is not one to throw in the towel so easily. "Things will fall in place with time. I never panic you know," he says.

Has Feroz Khan mellowed after settling in Bangalore? Feroz, while in Bombay, was always in the midst of controversy thanks to his loud mouth-

ed manner. He is a changed man now, claims Anil Kapoor who is just back from Bangalore after his shooting stint for Feroz's new film *Jaanbaaz*. All that he talks about these days are his new film *Jaanbaaz* (which Feroz is making with a minimum of fanfare) and God!

Mithun Chakraborty's elation after the unexpected success of *Pyaar Jhukta Nahin* has proved to be only a brief respite. The film's success made a big difference to his career and he threw a number of parties to celebrate the "great event." Filmmakers who had written him off signed him on and were willing to concede his price—Rs 12 lakhs—instead of the six to seven lakhs he was being offered previously. Even a man like Sultan Ahmed signed Mithun in place of Amitabh Bachchan for his new film, *Daata*, for Rs 15 lakhs, an amount Mithun never

dreamt of at one time. However, Mithun's demand lasted only till the release of *Yaadon ki Kasam*, with Zeenat Aman as his leading lady. ("It was my ambition to work with a big heroine like her"). The film was a 'washout' and Mithun is a miserable man.

Dev is also a little anxious about his son, *Suneil's* career. After *Suneil's* debut-making film, *Anand aur Anand* bombed at the box-office, his career graph has been more or less stymied. But there is still hope for the business management graduate-turned-actor who believes that he "could still manage a job if I failed to make it (in films)." *Main Tere Liye*, directed by uncle Vijay Anand and another film *Car Thief* with Vijayeta Pandit, will hopefully do for him what his maiden film failed to: bring him fame and success.



Richa Sharma: Dev's new find



Suneil and Natasha: job-hunting

Asiad Hangover

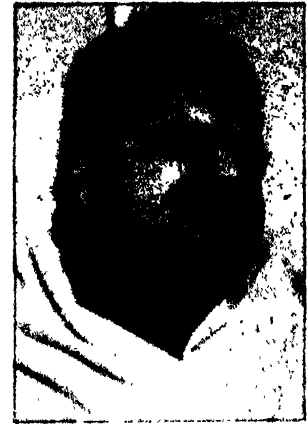
What happened to the five-star hotels which were supposed to come up in the capital for the Asian Games? Not only the private ventures, but even the government sponsored ones seem to be jinxed. The classic example is, of course, of Meridien, the hotel sponsored by Charanjit Singh, the former franchise holder of Coca Cola. The majestic building, constructed amidst one controversy after another, is almost ready. But rumours are afloat



Charanjit Singh: uninterested?

that Charanjit Singh is no longer interested in it and the hotel is up for sale. A ruling party MP, who has come into public life from the celluloid screen, is believed to have offered to buy the venture, but at the last moment chickened out when the controversies related to the hotel were unfolded before him. The other private hotel, of Bharat Hotels, sponsored by the family of Sagar Suri, too, is yet to start. It is said that it will be more of a commercial complex than a hotel. The fate of the public sector venture is the worst. The complex, next to the Indraprastha indoor stadium (now renamed Indira Gandhi sports complex) has been ready since long. But there are no takers. Situated on the banks of the Yamuna, it may be an attractive proposition for those who do not know Delhi. But a look at the dirty riverfront in the capital is bound to scare away prospective investors. While the Ganga is being cleaned, there is no similar proposal for the Yamuna so far.

Distinguished Combination



Shiela Dixit (left) and Satpal Malik: distinguished past

Among the new general secretaries of the Uttar Pradesh Congress(I) Committee, there are two who have a distinguished past. Shiela Dixit, the MP from Kannauj, was the moving spirit behind her father-in-law, Uma Shanker Dixit, in the early Seventies. Dixit, then, was the union home minister and the treasurer of AICC. Shiela Dixit helped him with party work. A lot of money was associated with

the politics of the Congress in the days when Uma Shanker Dixit was the Congress treasurer. The other distinguished personality is Satpal Malik, who till a few years ago was a close lieutenant of Lok Dal leader Charan Singh. His appointment as a Congress(I) office-bearer shows that after his defection last year, Malik has now been put in charge of attacking the citadel of his former mentor.

Language No Bar

The English versus Hindi debate seems to be hotting up again. The Prime Minister's conversation with children over the television sponsored by an English magazine has made many tongues wag. Could the majority of India's children understand the programme, is the question being asked. The children who featured in the Sunday morning programme, however, managed to outshine the journalists who had taken the same forum a week earlier by their straightforward questions. The Prime Minister had earlier in July, pulled up a party functionary in a largely attended public function in the capital for having spoken in English. A Rus-



Rajiv Gandhi

sian delegation present at the function had addressed the gathering in Hindi. When a senior Congress(I) functionary started speaking in English soon afterwards, Rajiv Gandhi politely chided him and asked him to speak in Hindi.

Scheduled Return

Did President Zail Singh rush back from Hyderabad on 24 July, the day Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed the Punjab accord with Sant Harchand Singh Longowal? The President was in Andhra Pradesh since 14 July and was expected back in the capital on the afternoon of 24 July. The Rashtrapati Bhavan had issued a "restricted" document listing the President's programme during the Andhra Pradesh tour. The document, signed by Air Marshal R. S. Naidu, military secretary, which was circulated on 13 July, had clearly stated that the President was to leave Hyderabad airport at 10am on 24 July, land at Palam airport at 12.05 pm



President Zail Singh

and reach Rashtrapati Bhavan by 12.25 pm. The President stuck to this programme. While it is true that Giani Zail Singh was kept in the dark about the accord, the speculation in the press that he had "rushed back" from Hyderabad is baseless. **D. E. Nizamuddin**

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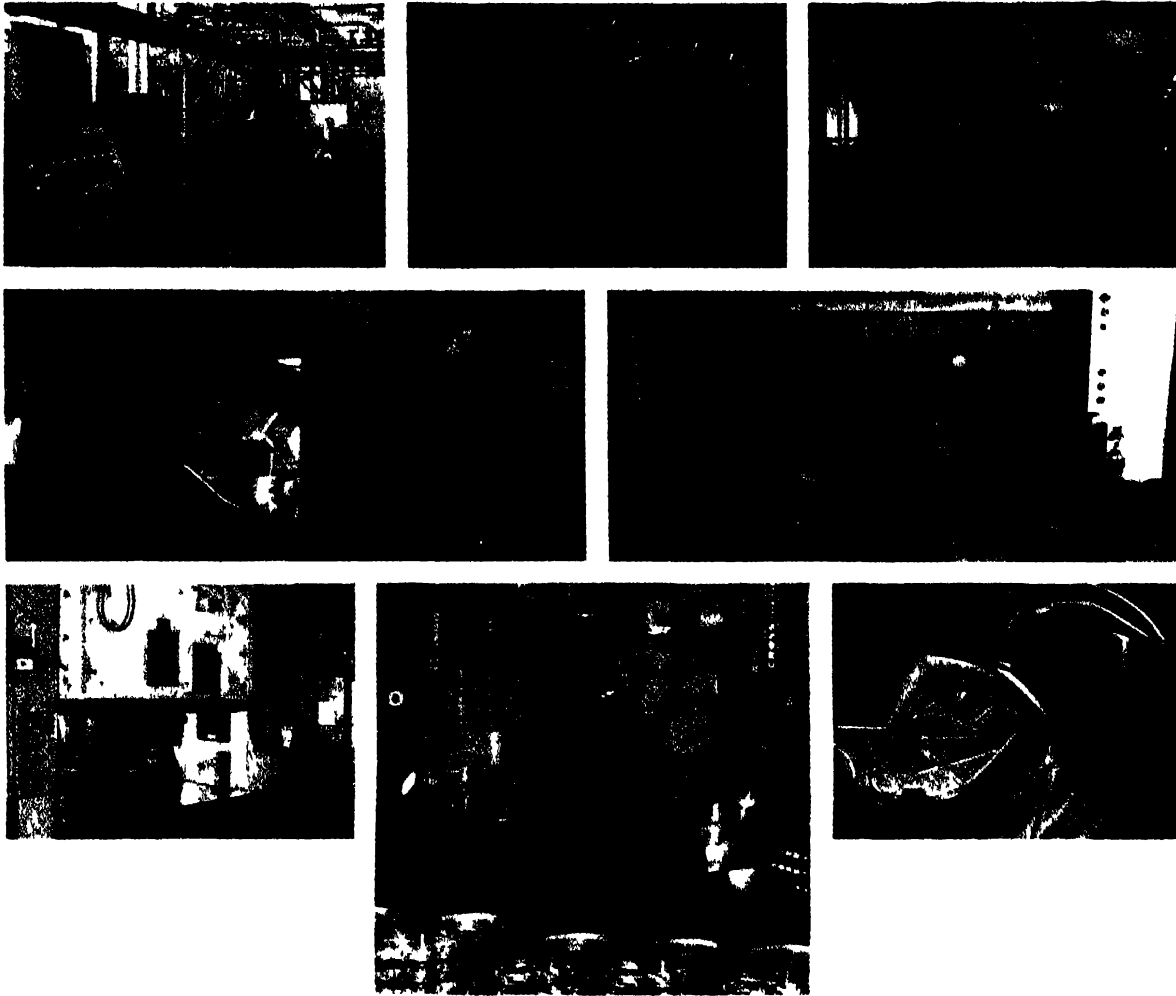
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Starvation in Kalahandi

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The J B Patnaik government is indifferent to the drought in Kalahandi Orissa, reports Sarada P Nanda

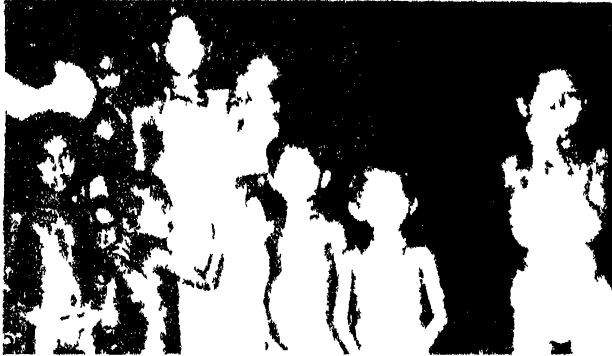
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"The (Bomb) Blasts were the Beginning of Our Revolution"

Ram Raja Prasad Singh, leader of the Nepal Janvadi Morcha which has claimed responsibility for the recent bomb blasts in that country, told Saumitra Banerjee

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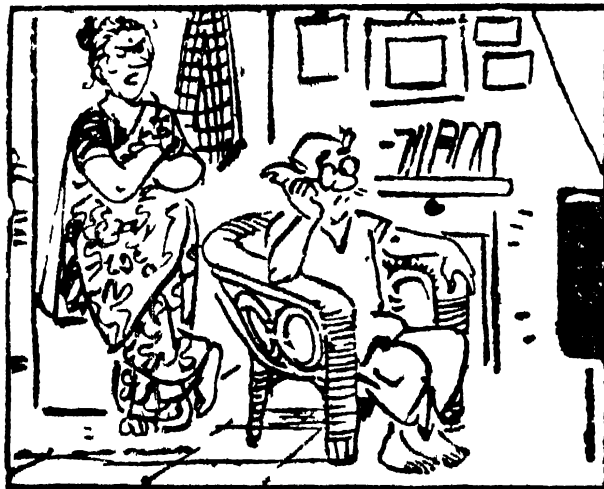
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PUNCHLINE/R.K. LAXMAN



Cover Transparency:
Sondeep Shankar

Well said! It is a historical achievement. The accord did bring about peace for nearly 20 hours over there!

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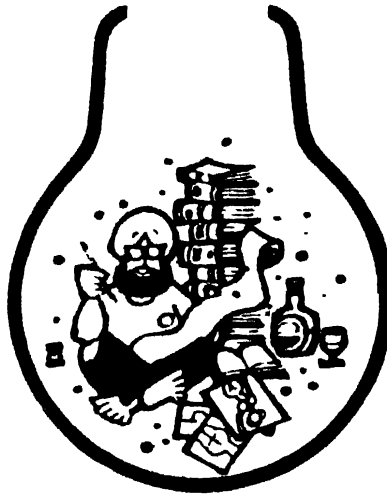
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Name Calling

One of the pleasanter tasks sometimes entrusted to me is to suggest names for new-born children. I take this assignment seriously because a person has to bear his or her name for a life time: it can be music to the ears or one that arouses derision and laughter. Not many people bother to change names given to them by their parents unless they are found in later life to be very embarrassing. The film world set the style of coining names it thought would go down better with fans than the originals. Some were singularly well-chosen. Thus were reborn the great lovers of the Hollywood screen, Rudolf Valentino and Cary Grant. Rudolf, an Italian, had been a Guglielmi; Grant, an Archibald Leech. What woman would want to make love to a gagli or a leech? The easily pronounceable Joan Crawford and Marilyn Monroe erased Lucille La Coeur and Norma Jean Baker. Our filmstars do not indulge in name-changing and believe in carrying their birth-names to astral heights. I could not have conceived of anyone with a name like Amitabh followed by Bachchan (note the totally unnecessary extra *ch*) or a Shatrughan achieving the fame they have. Some filmstars changed their names in the early days to pander to religious prejudice: hence Yusuf Khan became Dilip Kumar and a Muslim girl was reincarnated as Meena Kumari.

One cannot be too careful in choosing names. I have a *Dictionary of Hindu Names* which I consult when commissioned. I reject names that are very common. Thus are ruled out Shakuntala, Sheila, Shanta, Sita, Pushpa, Kamala, Asha, Usha, Urmila, Lakshmi, Rekha and many others for girls. So are Ajit, Ashok, Alope, Anand, Bharat, Pran, Prem, Ram, Lachman for boys. There are scores of more attractive alternatives to be found in the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Upanishads*, *Kalidasa* and other Sanskrit classics.

The practice of copying names of the aristocracy is becoming all too common. It had always been in vogue in England. When Elizabeth I was queen, the most popular girl's name was Elizabeth. When Georges or Edwards were kings, their loyal subjects named their progeny after them. In recent years Charles and Diana have gone up in the popularity poll as have Anne and William. We do not lag behind the English in flattering our monarchs by naming our children after them. They used to



be Ashok or Vikram (after Vikramaditya) Indira, which was a fairly common name received a boost after 1964 and many girls were given the name Priyadarshini. After 1976 there was a sudden explosion of Sanjays, and more recently, Rajivs. And now count the growing number of Sonias, Rahuls and Priyankas! Firoze and Varun may still have their day.

Next to royalty, the most sought after names are inspired by religion. In Christendom, Mary (mother of Christ) has kept the top position from one AD onwards. Although Jesus is regarded too holy a name to be passed around, that of the Baptist, John, remains a perennial favourite, as do others found in the Bible like Peter, Michael and Paul. Hindus and Muslims have no inhibitions in assuming names of gods, prophets or of members of their families: Ram, Lakshman, Sita, Krishna, Radha, Arjun remain top favourites amongst Hindus. Mohammed, Ayesha and Fatima amongst Muslims. Equally popular are names of warriors: Alexander amongst Christians; Ali, Qasim (after Mohammed Bin Qasim) and Salauddin, amongst Muslims; Bheem, Prithvi Raj, Pratap, Shivaji, Govind and Ranjit amongst Hindus. If we can't find warriors from history, we go for warlike macho substitutes. Shahbaz Khan, Tera Baz Khan, Sher Jang, Jabar Jang etc. However, one must be careful and not add martial surnames to non-martial first names. Thus adding Kesri (lion) to a Choocha Mal will only invite ridicule.

Giving nicknames which are highly inappropriate for their owners is a common practice all over the world. In England it is usual to call a very big man Tiny. Although we usually

follow the tradition of naming a blind person Sur Das or Soorma Singh, Punjabis often do just the reverse by naming a child born blind Lakh Netra Singh (one with a hundred thousand eyes). Some names have become proverbs: *Tareez kapray dee sir tay, tay naun Sarfaraz Khan* (A rag for a turban and he calls himself Sarfaraz Khan—a lord of the exalted head). Likewise Guru Nanak commented on the name *Sujaan* (wise) for a foolish man:

*Sun veykho loka eh viddaan
man andha naun Sujaan*

People regard this wonder of wonders

He has no light of knowledge and is named Sujaan

Black Humour

Sikhs have a legitimate grievance against the media. Whenever a crime is committed and the wrongdoer happens to be Sikh, the press describe him as a Sikh thief, robber or killer. Have you ever read similar religious identification applied to Hindu, Muslim or Christian miscreants? This is done deliberately to defame the entire community, say some Sikhs, whereupon a wiseacre remarked: "Sikh-Kabaab has become the favourite dish of the Indian media."

(Contributed by Tushar Kumar of Najibabad)

World Champion Floored

Actor-wrestler Dara Singh, taking a stroll along Juhu beach, was set upon by a dozen urchins who after beating him black and blue took away his purse, which, fortunately for him, contained very little money. Dara who had floored world's best wrestlers put up no resistance. When he arrived home with two black eyes, puffed cheeks and a torn shirt, his *sardarni* asked him in great alarm as to what had happened. Dara Singh told her all. "And why didn't you hit back? Surely you could have knocked the hell out of these skinny fellows!"

"Sure!" replied the Sardar, "But my fee for flooring champions is Rs 25,000. I don't fight free."

(Contributed by Wazir Chand Didi of Chandigarh)

66



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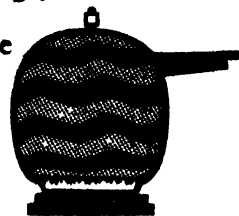
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how can you refuse to
get her a Prestige!**



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Fighting Banditry

Economists and social workers have for long held that the root of the problem in dacoit-infested areas in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh is the economic backwardness of these regions. However, a working group of secretaries to the government of India, appointed at the instance of the late Prime Minister, to decide on a long-term strategy for combating dacoity has found that these districts have been receiving their "normal share" of development assistance.

The group, headed by the planning secretary, concluded that funds should be channelised for ravine reclamation, road construction and rural electrification in dacoit-infested areas. Accordingly, the ministries of agriculture and transport in the three states have been asked to work out the details of these projects. The Planning Commission too, has been given the go-ahead to evolve a scheme for speedy electrification of the areas. Industrial development in these areas is also to receive a major thrust.

One wonders why it took so long and so many meetings for the secretaries to decide on these recommendations, which are far from sufficient. One also need not be secretary to the government of India to know that allocation of special funds would help retrieve the dacoit-infested areas and check the dacoit menace to some extent. What the secretaries do not realise is that the funds from the centre are distributed among several beneficiaries and are far from inexhaustible.

The problem needs to be tackled more imaginatively. These are the days of the private sector. The government has been granting concessions to it. Why does the government not declare a ten-year tax holiday for any industrial undertaking that is started in the area? The government could also consider a joint sector venture to retrieve lands from the ravines for agriculture and industry. Such an approach may, in fact, coincide with the working group's suggestion that "innovative development schemes" be taken up along with the existing ones. One result of this detailed study, which has taken more than a year to complete, has been that the governments of UP, MP and Rajasthan stopped spending money in these districts, since special programmes are on the anvil for them. Consequently, the backward areas of Bundalkhand in UP and Morena in MP have been starved of aid.

The three states have formulated a joint anti-dacoity strategy. But experience has shown that force cannot solve an essentially socio-economic problem. The state governments too, are well aware of this. After all, what Jayaprakash Narain accomplished in 1973—persuading dacoits to surrender *en masse*—the police forces of these states could not do with all their ammunition and intelligence.

Practically all the dacoits who had surrendered then have turned a new leaf today. Malkhan Singh and Tehsildar, who once terrorised the Chambal, are among the many reformed dacoits who are now living peacefully as farmers with the land they have received from the government.

One wishes that Phoolan Devi, too, had been rehabilitated when she surrendered to the Madhya Pradesh government, some years ago. It is alleged that she has been deprived of this because she belongs to the lower Mallah caste. However, the home ministry has refuted this charge: "No discrimination is done on the basis of caste. Phoolan Devi is being given the same treatment as other dacoits who have surrendered," it says. But it admits that "no special terms" of surrender or facilities have been provided to Phoolan Devi and her gang members.

Moreover, the government's policy on surrendering dacoits has changed. New Delhi has informed MP, Rajasthan and UP not to



Phoolan Devi (right): waiting for rehabilitation

accept offers of surrender, particularly from individual dacoits. The MP government replied that its policy for eradication of the menace is to apply maximum pressure on gangs so that they are either eliminated or forced into hibernation. The secretaries' group should have also examined such irrational attitudes of the state government before recommending any policy changes. So far the government has believed in meeting force with force. As a result larger amounts of money are being siphoned off for the police, guns and communications equipment. But, if a survey were to be made, one would find that there are more dacoits in the states now than a decade ago.

Rehabilitation of the dacoits should be the first priority of the government now. JP's humane approach had resulted in the mass surrenders of dacoits. However, the centre's decision not to take a "soft attitude towards surrendered dacoits," belies the hope that the problem will be handled with ease.

So far the government has believed in meeting force with force. As a result, more and more money is being siphoned off for the police, guns and communications equipment. But, if a survey were to be made, one would find that there are more dacoits in the state now than a decade ago.

Corrupt CM

How Corrupt is Bhajan Lal? (21—27 July) was yet another bold, investigative cover story. By exposing the corrupt practices of chief ministers Jagannath Mishra, A.R. Antulay, Babasaheb Bhosale, Madhavsingh Solanki, SUNDAY had brought about their downfall. It seems that it is Bhajan Lal's turn to follow suit. In fact Bhajan Lal has become the chief minister of Haryana by flouting all norms of democracy.

Arvinder Singh Walia, Calcutta

- Had it not been for the cover story, most readers would have been oblivious of the malpractices adopted by politicians like the Haryana CM. Even if one-fifth of what had been written was true, it would be crossing all limits of corruption. Bhajan Lal is lining his pockets at the expense of the government. An enquiry should be conducted against him as soon as possible.

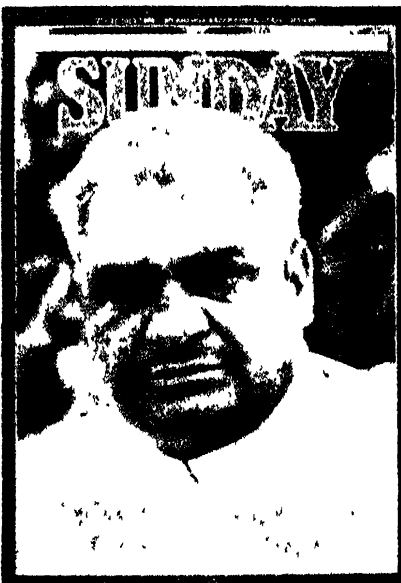
Puneet Agarwal, Guwahati

- Bhajan Lal is not worthy of being a chief minister. Like the digital flight data recorder (DFDR) and the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) which provide details of an aircraft's behaviour in flight, SUNDAY serves as a "corruption data recorder" of political parties and politicians.

Deepak Acharya, Phulbani (Orissa)

- The article on Bhajan Lal disillusioned me. We are disgusted with the state of affairs prevailing in the country today.

Waz Ahmed, Jorhat (Assam)



- Bhajan Lal is certainly living up to the "clean" image of Rajiv Gandhi. Similar investigative articles on the other corrupt chief ministers of the country would be welcome.

Arta Mishra, Cuttack

- Bhajan Lal does not deserve to be portrayed on the cover of SUNDAY.

S.S. Talatuf, Nairi (Orissa)

- The cover story was excellent. Henceforth, Bhajan Lal should be known as "corruption master" instead of a chief minister.

Sandeep Kumar, Phulbani (Orissa)

- Previously, politicians had a sense of commitment towards the nation. But now politics has been turned into

a paradise for people interested in making money.

Chamanlal Agrawal, Sonapur

- Bhajan Lal has been exposed. If the government does not take prompt action against him it will shatter the people's faith in the government. Similar charges were made against Krishna Ballabh Sahay, the chief minister of Bihar, who had to quit his office. Indira Gandhi had not hesitated to set-up a judicial enquiry against him then.

Rajesh Sahay, Hazaribagh (Bihar)

- The government should not hesitate to dismiss corrupt chief ministers like Bhajan Lal. The centre has taken a positive step in this direction by sacking Madhavsingh Solanki.

Trupti Panda, Dhenkanal (Orissa)

- I was pained to note that Sankarshan Thakur made sweeping remarks against the alleged involvement of Haryana Financial Corporation in sanctioning loans to the industrial units set up by family members of Bhajan Lal. In this context, the basic question raised by the correspondent is wrong. "How can mortgaged land be mortgaged again?" writes Sankarshan Thakur and he must surely be ill-informed since the Transfer of Property Act, 1873, makes it clear that a land can be mortgaged more than once. Thus no irregularity was committed by Haryana Financial Corporation when it advanced loans second and third time against the mortgaged land. The corporation seems to have taken requisite steps to secure its interests.

M.K. Rana, New Delhi

Guilty Solanki

The Mess in Gujarat (30 June—6 July) gave an objective analysis of the political situation in the state. Madhavsingh Solanki had to quit because of his inept handling of the turmoil. However, he has managed to have the last laugh by succeeding to install his man as the CM.

P. V. Srinivasan, Bombay

- The cover story explored the possibilities of defusing the situation in Gujarat and advised the dismissal of Madhavsingh Solanki. He was the person responsible for bringing things to such a pass. The reservation issue had gradually taken on a communal colour. Moreover, Solanki relied too much on the police to discipline the press and the people.

N. Ellango, Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu)

- The Congress(I) government failed to tackle the Gujarat situation. Either the Congress(I) is incapable of ruling or it is following the policy of divide and rule to hide intra-party rivalries and its failure to curb problems like price inflation and unemployment. The mere changing of chief ministers may not solve the problem in Gujarat. The anti-social elements, who are now at work in Gujarat cannot be controlled so easily unless there is a basic change in the outlook of the political leaders. It is an open secret that politicians patronise musclemen to remain in power. Little do they realise the effect of such an action. The politicians should sever relations with all communal elements.

M. H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

Names, Please

My attention has been drawn to the article *Congress(I) MP in Bank Fraud* (14—20 July). Speaking of the alleged fraudulent transactions of the Congress(I) MP's firm, the author mentioned that the executive partners in these concerns include, among others, "relations of VIPs like the former Supreme Court judge, Justice Jaganmohan Reddy." The press has every right to expose misdeeds of any person however highly placed he may be. I have many relations but I am not aware where some of them are or what they are doing. The author has chosen to drag in my name in a most casual manner without identifying who the relation is or how he has exploited my name.

P. Jaganmohan Reddy, Hyderabad

Who is Responsible for the Famine in Ethiopia?

Germaine Greer's superb write-up on Ethiopia was moving to say the least (*A Fight for Life*, 7—13 July and *A Tale of Hope*, 14—20 July). It was indeed amazing to learn that the people of Ethiopia fight for survival against hunger and poverty, against famine and drought with their only weapon: hope. Can mother earth and nature really be so harsh?

K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

- While billions of dollars are being spent on armaments by the so-called advanced countries, there are thousands who are languishing in Ethiopia for a loaf of bread. Ms Greer has done a magnificent job by exposing the hypocrisy that goes with the term "aid" by the richer countries to the needy ones. But the people of that unfortunate country are putting up a brave fight against all odds.

M.A. Quraishi, Lucknow

- I was appalled by Germaine Greer's ill-researched and misleading article on the famine in Ethiopia. I wish to point out in the first place that it is impossible to grasp the realities of the present mess—which has almost exclusively been brought about by the misrule of the illegitimate and thoroughly incapable junta—by a casual visit and by relying on the official version of the events. It is naive to conclude that only the shortage of rains in some parts of Ethiopia last year is responsible for the present disaster in this once 'bread-basket' of Africa. Ms Greer is certainly not qualified to draw her own conclusions brushing aside the criticism of the western media unless she has ulterior motives of presenting a false picture of the situation and thereby boosting the sagging morale of the ruling clique.

It is only the people of Ethiopia who know the full truth but they cannot express it. One has to live in Ethiopia for some time and observe things to understand what is happening in that country. It is not the drought, but wrong policies, oppressive methods and total inability of the rulers to tackle the economic problems of the country that has brought Ethiopia to this impasse. Massive, rather unprecedented expenditure on weapons and militarisation on a large scale and conscription of young farmers to the army, in addition to blindly following Marxism-Leninism as the guiding principle have resulted in this mess. Does Ms Greer know that freedom of speech, action and even thought do not exist in Ethiopia any more? The

so-called political cadres and party officials are none but a band of opportunists. Does the author know that citizens are forced to attend party meetings or do manual work any time in the day or night? The whole country has become a concentration camp and people are being treated as slaves. There is widespread dissatisfaction among the people and the government thrives on empty slogans. Will Germaine Greer believe that hundreds of thousands of young school boys and able-bodied farmers have been forcefully drafted into the army? Did she realise during her short visit how angry the people are against the present regime? I wish she could have talked to people in a freer atmosphere. It is no exaggeration to say that every Ethiopian is weeping at heart but cannot express their



A starving child outside a relief centre

woes for fear of persecution. Forcefully uprooting millions of starving people and moving them thousands of kilometres away in cold and wet weather when they need food and medicines on the spot has been admired by the author. Such operations are nothing but squandering the meagre resources of the country for political gain and to bring more misery to the people of Ethiopia.

Help to this government in the name of famine relief is bound to strengthen the hands of the present regime which is misusing international relief to feed over one million military and paramilitary forces which the government has raised to keep themselves in power. Taking things in Ethiopia on their face value is the biggest blunder a foreigner can make.

A. Solomon, Bale (Ethiopia)

Cooked Up

I was astounded to read in *Delhi Diary* (21—27 July) that I had made the suggestion, at the recent meeting of the Indo-US Subcommittee on Education and Culture, that "in future all sponsored visits of Indian journalists to the USA be regulated through the subcommittee—in other words, he wanted the Indian government to select the journalists." Although the proceedings of the subcommittee are confidential, I have no hesitation in stating that this is not true. In fact, I am personally in favour of more extensive exchange of journalists between the two countries and the question of governmental control does not arise. There was no difference of opinion whatsoever within the subcommittee on the media programme, without a single discordant voice on either side. As a journalist, I appreciate D.E. Nizamuddin's enterprise to fish out unpublished stories. But gossips too have to have some basis on facts and must not be hundred per cent cook-up.

Nikhil Chakravarty, New Delhi

Not True

I was surprised to read the report, *One That Got Away* (*Spotlight*, 3 June—6 July), stating that I had gone to Paris to perform at the Paris Festival at the invitation of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), despite my "earlier show of solidarity for the dancer's common cause." The report was utterly baseless. I am very much in India and the ICCR had not extended any invitation to me.

Yamini Krishnamurti, New Delhi

Fresh Tensions

The news item, *Glacier on Fire* (30 June—5 July) made interesting reading. Pakistan is acquiring sophisticated weapons with a view to creating tension in India. The recent incident in the Siachen glacier region is an example of such ill motive.

Subal Chandra Saha, Malda

Shrewd Move

The special report, *Why Vasantrao Patil Resigned* (16—22 June) was informative. Mr Patil's resignation was a clever ploy to deprive Sharad Pawar. My good wishes go out to the new chief minister Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar.

Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Sambalpur

WHAT WILL BABA JOGINDER DO NOW?

While Sant Harchand Singh Longowal is trying to bring peace to Punjab, the man who is placing obstacles in his way is Baba Joginder Singh, the father of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The 30 July clash in the Golden Temple complex showed that the Sikh extremist elements have not given up their belligerent stance. Sanjeev Gaur reports on the prevalent mood in Punjab.

The police had to enter the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar in less than a week after the memorandum of settlement had been signed between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Akali Dal chief, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. Despite the dissenting voices of former chief minister Prakash Singh Badal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) president, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the Anandpur Sahib meeting of the Akali Dal led by Longowal on 26 July had passed off peacefully. The political differences and personality and ego problems within the Akali Dal had not culminated in violence. But when Longowal went to Amritsar for the first time after the accord was signed on 30 July, the calm was shattered. Supporters of the "United" Akali Dal of Baba Joginder Singh, the father of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who has been the patriarch of the Sikh extremists for the past few months, tried to assault Longowal at the Teja Singh Samundari Hall. It was evident from the manner in which the attack was carried out, that despite the majority of the people of Punjab wanting peace, the disruptionists were determined to keep alive the flames which have engulfed the state in the last five years. Sant Longowal has done his bit in trying to restore normalcy in Punjab. From all indications, despite feeling sore about the way the accord was reached behind his back, Prakash Singh Badal will not desert the party led by Longowal. And if these two remain together, the chances of Tohra going anywhere else are slim. The endeavour for peace in Punjab is serious. But the question is: will Baba Joginder Singh join this quest? Or, will his supporters, especially the All India Sikh

Students' Federation (AISSF) activists, keep up their belligerence? Peace is in the interest of the masses at large. The politicians too want peace. Only if there is peace in Punjab can elections be held in the state. And if elections cannot be held by 5 October and the Constitution is amended to enable the continuance of President's Rule, then political power may elude the Punjab politicians for some time. Peace, followed by elections, therefore, is the desire of the politicians. The interests of the extremists, however, do not coincide with those of the politicians. Eighty three-year-old Baba Joginder Singh is the centre of attention. What he does will determine the course of politics in the state in the next few months.

The state administration, which failed to take advantage of the events of 30 July (when many wanted extremists were seen outside the Golden Temple complex; they could easily have been rounded up if the police was vigilant), has reacted to the belligerent postures of Baba Joginder Singh by registering a case of sedition against his son, Jagjit Singh Rode. The case was registered at the Beas police station on 1 August. The charge against Jagjit Singh Rode is that he delivered a "very inflammatory and provocative" speech at Butala village on 6 June, when the Akalis were observing the *Ghallugara* week on the first anniversary of the army action in the Golden Temple. When action is taken on 1 August on an act committed on 6 June, the discretion of the administration can be gauged. It is apparent that but for Baba Joginder Singh's anti-accord stance, the case against Jagjit Singh Rode, the elder brother of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, would not have been initiated. Apart from the stance of Baba Jogin-

der Singh, another disconcerting news which came from Punjab in the post-accord week was that Bimla Khalsa, a former nurse of Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, was going to join politics. Bimla Khalsa is the widow of Beant Singh, the slain assassin of Indira Gandhi.

The extremist Sikhs have found a new king in the father of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. His importance can be gauged from the fact that this year he was the only Indian, according to intelligence sources, to have received 14 greetings from no less a personage than the Pakistan head of state, President Zia-ul-Haq. With the media ready to churn out stories about him, the Baba has not lagged far behind his son's popularity either. *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines have carried reports about him. So have foreign newspapers, including the prestigious *New York Times*.

The Baba entered politics with a bang on the last day of May this year. In a sudden and dramatic move, he dissolved the two main factions of the Shiromani Akali Dal led by Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi and merged them to form a single unit, the "United" Akali Dal. As the acting convener of the party he soon appointed a nine-member *ad hoc* committee with Simranjit Singh Mann, the dismissed Indian Police Service (IPS) officer currently under detention in Rajasthan's Bharatpur jail as a suspect in the conspiracy to kill the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as the convener. Till Mann's release, announced the Baba, he would be the acting convener. In a move which smacked of dictatorship, the old man included the four top Akali leaders—Harchand Singh Longowal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Pra-

kash Singh Badal and Jagdev Singh Talwandi—also in the committee along with his eldest son, Jagjit Singh Rode, Harjinder Singh, a former Indian diplomat in Norway who had quit the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in protest against the army action in the Golden Temple, and a former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, Gurtej Singh.

So sudden were the moves initiated by Baba Joginder Singh that Sant Longowal, the senior Akali Dal leader, was taken unawares. In a single stroke, reminiscent of a bloodless coup, the old man had hijacked the Akali Dal. In the struggle for supremacy which followed, a slighted Longowal rejected the Baba's *ad hoc* committee and resigned as the chief of the party. However, he had to withdraw his resignation when the district presidents of the party in Punjab and six other states in the country "ordered" Longowal to take over the reins of the party again.

Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra also rejected the *ad hoc* committee of Baba Joginder Singh. But they were not very vocal. And within a few days, four close confidants of Badal joined Baba Joginder Singh. Later the Baba removed Longowal and Tohra from the *ad hoc* committee but not Badal.

In the last three months, the Akali Dal has witnessed a confrontation between Longowal and Baba Joginder Singh. Longowal who had been confronting Bhindranwale from the day the Akali *dharamyudh morcha* was launched from the Golden Temple on 4 August 1982 till Operation Bluestar, had to put up a fight against Baba Joginder. Longowal, being a more experienced politician, played his cards close to his chest. He kept criticising and attacking the government for not accepting the demands of the Akali Dal at the meetings and conventions he was addressing in Punjab and even parts of Rajasthan during the last few months.

There is no denying that though Baba being the father of Bhindranwale has many similarities with his son, he does not have the same charisma.

Perhaps, his greatest and only qualification is that he is the father of Bhindranwale. No Akali leader can afford to criticise Bhindranwale today. In private conversations, even educated Sikhs can be heard comparing Bhindranwale with famous Sikh warriors and heroes like Baba Deep Singh and Banda Bahadur.

Baba Joginder Singh is not controversial at all. According to sources close to the Bhindranwale family, the father and son, in fact, did not get



Baba Joginder Singh sitting in front of a portrait of his son

"The Sikhs Have Got Nothing From the Accord"

Baba Joginder Singh told SUNDAY

On 30 July, the day a bloody clash took place in the Golden Temple complex, Baba Joginder Singh was in the residence of Giani Mohan Singh, a priest in the holiest Sikh shrine. The residence is just behind the famous Manji Sahib Hall, the political stage of the Akalis within the Golden Temple complex. The Baba gave an interview to SUNDAY at four in the afternoon. The clash between his supporters and those of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal had taken place an hour-and-a-half earlier. The convener of the "United" Akali Dal answered the questions from his bed on which he was resting. Mohinder Singh Sainyanwala, a former Akali Member of Parliament was also present during the interview. Excerpts:

Q: What have you to say about the violence in the Golden Temple complex today? Clashes took place between your supporters including members of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) and those of Sant Longowal in which not only swords and lathis and stones but firearms too were used.

A: I blame both the government and him (Longowal) for the happenings today in our most sacred religious place. And the government by sending police into the Harimandir Sahib has once again challenged the dignity and pride of the Sikhs. Will the government let us (Sikhs) live in India with honour?

Q: But your supporters began the trouble by organising a black-flag demonstration against Sant Longowal immediately after his arrival in the temple complex.

A: Our boys did organise a symbolic protest against him (Longowal) for signing an agreement with the Prime Minister. But they were peaceful. I was not present at the spot but I have been told that one of Longowal's bodyguards fired the first shot in the air. Our men did not return the fire at all. They did not have any firearms. Then the police brutally beat up our boys. The police entered the Manji Sahib with their shoes on. The police came in my room and took away ten persons including the secretary, Master Surat Singh and my assistant Amolak Singh.

Q: What is your reaction to the

agreement signed between the Prime Minister and Sant Longowal?

A: I have only one word for the Delhi accord: rejected.

Q: But why? What are your objections to the accord?

A: The accord is not on principles. None of the seven preconditions which we as well as Longowal had put up was accepted. Have they (the government) released the Sikh soldiers who had left their barracks protesting against the attack on the Harimandir Sahib. They are still being tried in the army courts. Has the government released all the Sikh youths arrested before and after the army action in the Golden Temple? The Sikhs have got nothing

rights by peaceful means, will you then take to arms?

A: Time will tell.

Q: Will you accept support of foreign countries if they come forward to assist you in your fight for your rights?

A: Time will tell.

Q: Do you think the government has tried to divide the Sikhs by signing an accord with Sant Longowal?

A: I have told you I have rejected the accord. I do not want to dwell further on the same subject.

Q: You have been doing amrit prachar (baptising the Sikhs) for the last three months. How many Sikhs have you baptised so far?

A: More than 20,000.

Q: What is the purpose of amrit prachar?

A: It is the order of the Guru. I know the government is most irritated with my amrit prachar.

Q: What are your views about Rajiv Gandhi?

A: He is the son of a Panditani mother and a Parsi father.

Q: What do you think of him as a Prime Minister?

A: They say he is the Prime Minister. We feel his actions are not those of a Prime Minister.

Q: Can you elaborate?

A: The Delhi riots took place in his regime. Whether he was behind the riots or not is another matter, but he is responsible for the riots. Then Guru Granth Sahib was desecrated during the November riots in his regime. Innocent Sikh children were butchered and burnt in his regime. Sikh women were raped during his regime. Are these actions of a Prime Minister?

Q: What do you think of Sant Longowal?

A: Whatever he (Longowal) has done, I have rejected that completely.

Q: What do you think of the Punjab Governor Arjun Singh who played a key role in the Delhi accord?

A: He is only a servant of the master. He does what Rajiv Gandhi asks him to do.

Q: Is there still any hope for unity in the Akali Dal?

A: Healthy and honest suggestions can be considered.

Interviewed by Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

The Delhi riots took place during Rajiv Gandhi's regime. The Guru Granth Sahib was desecrated during his regime. Innocent Sikh children were butchered and burnt in his regime. Sikh women were raped during his regime. Are these acts of a Prime Minister?

from the Delhi accord.

Q: What is your next move?

A: Whatever Wahe Guru (God) wills. What exactly do we want from the government now? We are seeking our rights from the government.

Q: What are those rights?

A: We will tell those to the government.

Q: But do you not think that by signing an accord with Sant Longowal, the Prime Minister has conveyed the feeling that he does not care for you and your group?

A: Mark my words. The government will have to ask us about the rights of Sikhs.

Q: If you fail to achieve your

along well. Bhindranwale was quite detached from his family. Baba Joginder Singh rarely visited the Golden Temple during the nearly three-year stay of his son in the holiest Sikh shrine till Operation Bluestar. Bhindranwale never gave much importance to his father even when the latter came to see him in the Golden Temple. The father would be treated like any ordinary visitor or admirer by Bhindranwale.

Baba Joginder Singh seems to possess no vision. Neither does he have a concrete party programme. He is often vague in replying to questions put by mediemen. But, according to Akali Dal followers, Baba Joginder

Singh has many advantages. He has not made any provocative statement so far. Neither has he given vent to anti-Hindu sentiments. What is important, he is not as hated by the general public in Punjab as his son was. Akali leaders including Longowal, Badal and Tohra cannot afford to criticise Baba Joginder Singh. In fact, all the top Akali leaders in their public statements have always expressed "great regard" for him. On the other hand, the Delhi accord has helped Baba Joginder Singh in consolidating his position among the Sikh masses. Said a Sikh intellectual of Punjab University, pleading anonymity, "After the Delhi accord,

Baba Joginder Singh has gained popularity among the Sikh masses without making any efforts. The reason is very simple. Longowal has reached an accord with the government. Now he will automatically lose popularity among the Sikhs. We can only accept a leader who is anti-government." Although the Delhi accord has brought about a feeling of relief among the people in Punjab, the Sikhs living in villages are not very happy over the Rajiv-Longowal agreement. They say, if we got this only by reaching a settlement with the centre, we could have got the same three years ago." The Akalis have a very strong base in Punjab

'Longowal is a Liar'

Jagdev Singh Talwandi told SUNDAY

Jagdev Singh Talwandi is a bitter critic of Harchand Singh Longowal. Talwandi hates Longowal because the latter replaced him as the Akali chief in 1980. During the course of a brief interview with SUNDAY at Amritsar on 30 July—a day after the bloody clash between supporters of Baba Joginder Singh and Longowal in the Golden Temple complex—Talwandi, presently in Baba Joginder Singh's camp, was vehemently critical of Longowal, especially for having signed the Delhi accord with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Excerpts

Q What have you to say about the clash between the supporters of Baba Joginder Singh and Sant Longowal in the Golden Temple complex?

A: I am sure the government was behind the clash. The government wants to keep us divided.

Q: What are your comments about the Delhi accord?

A: It is an accord between Longowal and the government. Two seniormost Akali leaders, Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra have rejected the accord. Baba Joginder Singh has rejected it. The Istri Akali Dal president Bibi Rajinder Kaur has rejected it.

Q: What do you think of the role of Longowal in reaching an accord with the Prime Minister?

A: He (Longowal) has sold himself to the government. He even tried to sell the Sikh Panth to the government though he is not the representative of the Sikhs. He has tried to sell the Punjab cause. He is a liar. How many times he himself

has pledged in the presence of the holy Guru Granth Sahib at the Akali conventions and meetings, even in the Harimandir Sahib that nothing short of the acceptance of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution would be acceptable as a solution to the Punjab problem? And in the Delhi accord, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution has not been even touched.

Q: What are you planning to do next? Will you start a fresh agita-

tion in Punjab?

A: We will think about that. For the time being, we are setting up ad-hoc committees of the party at the village level. From 16 August, we are starting our district level conferences to educate people about the futility of the Delhi accord. Already people, especially in the villages in Punjab, have strongly resented the Delhi accord. Go to any village in Punjab and see for yourself the reaction of the common people.

Q: But do you not think there is a general feeling of relief among the people in Punjab after the Delhi accord? The people were fed up and today they feel that there will be peace in Punjab.

A: This is a wrong impression. If you give nothing to the people who are fed up after they had struggled so much for their genuine rights during the last three years, they are bound to feel more frustrated. What has the Delhi accord given to Punjab? Nothing.

Q: What do you think of Rajiv Gandhi?

A: Whatever he (Rajiv Gandhi) has done is not good for the country or the Sikhs or Punjab. He has succeeded in purchasing a few individuals. But the accord between Rajiv Gandhi and Longowal is not acceptable to the Sikh Panth.

Q: Will you participate in the election if it is held in Punjab now?

A: Elections in Punjab cannot be held till the problem is solved. But the government must realise that Punjab is not Assam or West Bengal.

Interviewed by Sanjeev Gaur, Chandigarh



Talwandi: critical of the accord



Policemen outside Baba Atal soon after the 30 July clash in the Golden Temple complex

villages. According to official sources, the rural Sikhs are critical of Longowal and not Rajiv Gandhi for the Delhi accord.

Punjab-watchers feel that Baba Joginder Singh cannot be ignored. The Baba, according to observers, will also gain strength from the open criticism and rejection of the accord by the two senior Akali leaders, Badal and Tohra. Besides these two, many other prominent Akali leaders have also rejected the Delhi accord. The Istri Akali Dal president, Rajinder Kaur, daughter of Master Tara Singh is among those who have rejected the accord. She told SUNDAY, "The Sikhs have got nothing from the accord. Besides, the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) is also with Baba Joginder Singh."

The AISSF supporters had organised a black-flag demonstration against Longowal on his arrival in the Golden Temple on 30 July after the Delhi accord had been signed. Soon afterwards, gunshots were heard for the first time as supporters of Longowal and Baba Joginder Singh clashed outside the Teja Singh Samundari Hall in the Golden Tem-

ple complex. Swords, spears, lathis and stones were freely used in the melee. Baba Joginder Singh was relaxing in the residence of Giani Mohan Singh, a priest of the Golden Temple, when the clash took place. The police entered the temple complex after the clash and took away ten supporters of the Baba including his party secretary, Surat Singh Khalsa, and personal assistant Amolak Singh from the room where the Baba was resting. The police arrested 62 persons from the Golden Temple complex that day. Cases of attempt to murder were registered against 35 of them. Most of them were supporters of Baba Joginder Singh.

Baba Joginder Singh who has been busy doing *amrit prachar* for the last five months will now be addressing districtwise party conferences all over the state from 16 August till 8 September, the day he has convened an all-world Sikh conference in Amritsar. Baba Joginder Singh, according to sources close to him, will attack Longowal at the party conferences and conventions. Baldev Singh Brar, an advocate and a close confidant of the Baba said,

"Babaji will be able to tell the Sikh masses now that Longowal is a man of the ruling party. Babaji will tell the people that Longowal tried to sell the Sikh Panth as well as the Punjab cause by signing an accord with the Prime Minister. He (Longowal) had been harping on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution for the last so many years and while signing an accord with the Prime Minister he forgot about it. As a representative of the Sikhs as well as in his individual capacity, he just forgot about the resolution. The Sikh Panth will never forgive Longowal. He will get his punishment."

On 31 July, the day the Congress(I) MP, Lalit Maken and his wife Geetanjali, were shot dead outside their New Delhi residence, rumours were heard in Amritsar that Longowal had been killed. A senior intelligence officer of Punjab remarked, "Longowal's life will be in danger now. For the Sikh militants, he will be on the hit-list along with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi." Has the Delhi accord really solved the Punjab problem and brought permanent peace in the troubled state?

"The Terrorists Have Been Isolated"

Punjab Governor Arjun Singh told SUNDAY

Soon after his swearing-in as the Governor of Punjab in March 1985, Arjun Singh swung into action. He opened the doors of the Raj Bhawan and streams of people walked in. They poured their hearts out to him. He listened to all and at the end of the conversation often uttered in a very low voice, "I will look into it." Four months later, his efforts fructified in the accord. Excerpts from an interview:

Q: How did you come to grips with the Punjab problem?

A: The technique was simple. You have to look at it from a psychological point of view. People from all walks of life shared their feelings with me since I made myself accessible to them. I never went to Panchmari after Badal and the others went there although people have been persisting otherwise. I came to Punjab without any contacts and started as a fresher.

Q: What was the basis of your assessment of the Punjab situation?

A: Well I was convinced from the very beginning that people from all walks of life wanted a solution to the problem. They were in no mood for the agitation to continue. I think that was enough incentive for me to start. I told the Prime Minister that the people of Punjab want peace. He was earnest and keen to bring about the same. But then I thought that the people of Punjab should themselves experience the sincerity of the PM to solve the Punjab problem. That is how the PM's Hussainiwalla visit came about. His message and announcements there were a clear indication to the people of Punjab about the honesty of his efforts.

Q: What happened after Hussainiwalla?

A: Once the message was put across there was no stopping people, politicians and the media. Everyone praised it wholeheartedly. Then came constructive suggestions and expressions from all directions. This further confirmed my belief that the people in Punjab were striving for an amicable solution. That is how the further steps of releasing the political workers of the AISSF and other political parties came about. Then

came Baisakhi and the Jallianwala Bagh meet which was an expression of concern and commitment not only of the centre but of the whole country.

Q: Do you think the Punjab accord meets all the demands of the Sikhs?

A: It is an effort at bringing about a consensus of the main issues. It should be looked at in totality.

Q: Do you think the PM had some understanding with Sant Longowal beyond the accord?

A: Personally I think none. You should put this question to them.

Q: When and where did you first meet Sant Longowal?

A: On 21 July at Chandigarh.

Q: Did you meet Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra too?

A: No.

Q: Is it true that the centre had suggested to Sant Longowal to ex-

clude Badal and Tohra from the meeting with the PM?

A: The centre has not started running the Akali Dal. It was entirely their own party matter. We have no idea as to why the two did not attend the meeting.

Q: Will the bitter waters issue affect Rajasthan adversely?

A: To be fair to the accord, I think we should not comment upon these issues. It is for the tribunals to look into.

Q: Do you think the terrorists will strike again?

A: Well, today they are totally isolated. Our efforts in this direction are still continuing. Law and order is under control. The desperate people who don't wish to see Punjab peaceful will keep trying to disrupt the peace but we are fully prepared. Those who will disturb the nation's integration will be dealt with firmly.

Q: What do you have to say about Bhajan Lal's comment that Abohar and Fazilka will go to Haryana?

A: I am no one to comment. It is for the tribunals and commissions to take further decisions on the accord.

Q: What do you think of the dissent of Badal and Tohra to the accord?

A: I don't want to involve myself in this controversy. However, the accord is meant for the state and not for individuals.

Q: Do you think the United Akali Dal's reaction on 30 July will hamper the spirit of the peace accord?

A: We will take care of these risks. We have made it very clear that no one has the right to disturb the peace of Punjab and India. We have arrested the miscreants and we shall tackle such people firmly. They can play their politics inside their party but no exhibition that is violent will ever be tolerated.

Q: Can we hope for elections in the near future?

A: Elections are certainly on the horizon but a decision will have to be taken keeping in view the situation prevailing in the state. Anyway, we need some time to assess the situation about which I shall be able to make up my mind only by the first week of August.

Interviewed by Rita Sharma, Chandigarh



I was convinced that people from all walks of life wanted a solution to the Punjab problem. They were in no mood for the agitation to continue. I think that was enough incentive for me to start.

The Fight for Supremacy

The Akali Dal is riven with intra-party rivalry

The historical accord on Punjab has brought a sense of relief to both the Sikhs and the Hindus. The euphoria throughout the state indicates that people of Punjab want peace. But Prakash Singh Badal, the former chief minister of Punjab seemed dejected. He refused to comment on the accord saying that he reserved them for the meeting in Anandpur Sahib.

At Anandpur Sahib, Badal and Tohra were closeted with Harchand Singh Longowal for more than three hours much before the formal meeting of the Akalis began. S. S. Barnala and Balwant Singh also joined them, the three pro-accord leaders made a vain effort to win over the two dissidents. At the meeting both Badal and Tohra made unemotional speeches expressing their dissent over each clause of the accord. Tohra added that the party had demanded special rights for Punjab in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution whereas only a part of it dealing with the inter-state relations has been referred to the Sarkaria Commission. He further said that the resolution was adopted at the historic Anandpur Sahib gurudwara and the entire *sangat* (congregation) has supported it. He regretted that Sant Longowal did not even care for the pre-conditions laid down for talks on 8 July. The SGPC president said that unless the centre announced a general amnesty for all army deserters and those arrested in connection with the trouble in Punjab, the dignity of the Sikhs could not be restored.

Prakash Singh Badal too did not approve of the accord. He told the gathering that the Sikhs have lost their wealth, their religious places and above all their honour and despite this they went ahead with the talks with the centre. Badal also expressed his dissatisfaction over the enquiry into the anti-Sikh riots. He also described the territorial commissions as deceptive which he felt could deliver judgements against the interests of Punjab. Badal said that the army jawans had deserted their posts, swayed by sheer sentiments but, as per the terms of the accord only 280 of them would be resettled although their total number was 12,000.

That both Badal and Tohra are fighting for their political survival is

an open secret. It was Prakash Singh Badal who promoted Sant Longowal when Bhindranwale was reigning supreme. Badal had expected to use the Sant's influence as and when required. But during the recent talks with the centre, the Sant ignored the advice of Badal. Not that this has come as a shock to Badal. He had the taste of the Sant's changed attitude much before this accord. Sant Longowal had replaced pro-Badal Jatheids with his own followers. There were many more indications for Badal after their release. Badal, after the emergence of Baba Joginder Singh and the so-called 'United' Akali Dal had purposely kept his feet in both



Prakash Singh Badal: critical of the accord

the camps. While many of Badal's favourites were in Joginder Singh's camp, the Sant on his part, completely ignored both Badal and Tohra and went ahead with this accord. This has not only hurt their ego, but has also undermined their position in the party. Badal exhibited his hurt ego in a unique manner after the crucial meeting was over at Anandpur Sahib; he evaded all queries of journalists but later just two kilometres from the outskirts of Anandpur Sahib, he sat on the road, answering all their questions. Ironically, while he repeatedly said that he was not addressing a press conference, he answered all the questions,

gave details of his speech at the meeting. He made it very clear that contrary to Sant Longowal's claim, the decision to accept the accord was not unanimous and that he differed on each and every clause of the accord.

Both Badal and Tohra are shocked at the sudden emergence of Sant Longowal as a national leader. Another reason for their dissent on the accord is the independent manner in which the Sant has tackled the situation. Badal went to the extent of telling journalists at his roadside press conference that he will voice his differences wherever there is a Sikh forum. Political observers feel that both Badal and Tohra are likely to launch a mass contact drive—as they have also stated—to mobilise support for themselves against the accord. But considering the overwhelming support of the Sikh masses to the accord, it is doubtful whether such a campaign will succeed in arousing Sikh sentiments. The agreement has not affected the masses adversely and secondly both Badal and Tohra are shrewd enough to understand that a split at this juncture would ultimately prove fatal for the Akali Dal. Longowal has once again regained the image of a moderate and anyone who leaves the Dal will be branded as an extremist.

The Sant's emergence as a national leader can be attributed to various factors. The Sant recently toured the whole country in an effort to assess the real damage done to the Sikhs during the November riots. His visit to other states, brought him face-to-face with reality and his meetings with various intellectual and other groups also influenced his attitude towards the Punjab problem. Besides the support of the entire opposition when he adopted a conciliatory stand and the total disgust among the people in Punjab who were fed up by the prolonged uncertainty could have been vital factors. The Sant addressed a series of meetings attended by a large number of Hindus. The first one in Sangrur earned him a lot of respect from Hindus and paved the way for communal harmony. Most important of all, was the role that the government—especially Governor Arjun Singh—played by building up the Sant's image as a national leader.

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

"Badal is the Main Leader"

Akali Dal chief Sant Longowal told SUNDAY

Q: How was the accord reached in just three days?

A: I feel even three days was a long time—after witnessing Rajiv Gandhi's sincerity of purpose and our honest struggle, I think it should have taken only three minutes.

Q: If in some changed circumstances, the decisions are not implemented by the centre...?

A: *Likhti faisle koi sarkar nahin badaldi.* (No government goes back on written decisions). Also I am very hopeful of the implementation of the accord.

Q: The general impression is that Badal fears that there is a campaign to promote Barnala as a prospective chief minister if the Akali Dal comes to power in the state.

A: Badal is still the main leader of the Akali Dal. If he is feeling insecure, it's wrong on his part. He should not lend his ears to others who are opposed to us and trying their level best to divide us. We should stand as one. I repeat, even today the Akali Dal party leader is Badal alone. After the Gurnam Singh ministry, it was Badal who was chosen as chief minister. Why? (It was) Barnala (who) had suggested Badal's name.

Q: Why do you think Tohra is opposed to the accord?

A: I don't think he is.

Q: But he has expressed his dissent.

A: Tohra is the most experienced man in the Akali Dal. He is the president of the SGPC. A wise man. He knows best what he is doing and why. But I personally feel both Badal and Tohra will realise that the accord will benefit the Panth and the people of Punjab in the long run.

Q: Badal has claimed that only 280 army deserters out of 12,000 qualify for the resettlement clause. What is your opinion?

A: Badal has got the wrong impression. In the first place I have gone through the exact figures of deserters which is not 12,000 but about 6,000. They have been divided into three categories and will be dealt with accordingly. Apart from the accord, I personally feel that considering the centre's honest attitude towards handling the Pun-

jab problem, the deserters cases will be handled kindly. Some of them have already been released at Nagpur. I for myself don't doubt the sincerity of purpose in the accord.

Q: What about the Akali Dal's demands regarding economic and educational policies?

A: These will automatically be taken care of once the demand for state autonomy is accepted.

Q: With reference to the river waters issue, do you think Haryana and Rajasthan will get a fair deal?

A: *Desh de kanoon mutabak essa koi kanoon nahin jis naal Haryana te Rajasthan nu Punjab, pani deve.* Punjab he ess pani da kudrat walon hakdar hai (According to the laws of our country, there is no clause which gives Haryana and Rajasthan the rights to this water. Even God had willed Punjab to have the real right over this water). However, we are ready to share as much as we can out of our share and that has been settled by fixing a date.

Q: What are your comments on Bhajan Lal's statement that Abohar and Fazilka will go to Haryana?

A: No, this is a wrong claim. Fazilka and Abohar have not even been referred to in the accord. And the tribunal too is meant to settle the transfers of Hindi-speaking villages to Haryana and Punjabi-speaking villages to Punjab. There is no question of Abohar and Fazilka going to Haryana. In any case these are also Punjabi-speaking areas.

Q: How do you feel about the rejection of the accord by the "United" Akali Dal?

A: They have their own views, so let them express it in any way they like. The Akali Dal had started the morcha on 4 August 1982 for certain demands. And all those demands have been accepted in the accord. We have succeeded in our morcha. If others don't approve of it let them not. They should rethink over this rejection with a cool mind. *Ohna nu kisse panth virodhi di chakk which nahin ouna chahida* (they should not let people who are opposed to the Panth lead them). The accord is in the favour of the Panth and the whole of Punjab.

Q: Do you think their rejection of the accord has in any way influenced the people of Punjab?

A: No, I don't think so. I have already addressed about seven or eight conferences in Amritsar, Sangrur, Faridkot and Bhatinda. The overwhelming response in favour of the accord and also the impressive number of (people at these) gatherings is enough indication that people have appreciated the accord.

Q: Don't you think differences with Jagdev Singh Talwandi over the years led to the formation of "United" Akali Dal, which is now all set to work against you and the Akali Dal under the leadership of Baba Joginder Singh?

A: I personally have nothing against Talwandi or Baba Joginder Singh. While Talwandi is like a brother to me, Baba is a *buzurg* (revered old man) if nothing else at least at the level of humanity. Unfortunately, they are caught up in a situation where *Panth virodhi* (enemies of the Panth) are exploiting them. It will need great courage on the part of both Talwandi and Baba to come out of their clutches.

Q: Why do you think Baba Joginder Singh was the only Indian to receive 14 greetings from Zia-ul-Haq?

A: Good enough, the Akali Dal is not an agent of anyone. *Eh tan kival te kewal Guru Granth Sahib de sidhantan nu parwan karan lai hai* (Akali Dal is an agent of only Shri Guru Granth Sahib and a messenger of its principles).

Q: Will the Akali Dal reconsider its policy of mixing religion with politics especially after what it has gone through in the past three years?

A: We will continue with the religio-political structure because I very strongly feel that it's only *dharam* which brings an element of kindness, honesty, and sincerity in politics. Otherwise a ruler tends to become a dictator. Sikhs will continue to seek guidance from the Shri Guru Granth Sahib in the fields of religion and politics.

Interviewed by Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

Can Punjab Risk an Early Poll?

The accord should be given some time to sink in before polls are announced in the state since the election campaign may sharpen the communal divide, feels Inder Kumar Gujral

The post accord feeling of relief has surfaced a desire to expedite the election process in the state. The five-year term of the Assembly has already expired and unless a popular government can be put in office before 5 October, the Constitution has to be amended to enable the centre to continue its rule.

As a principle, I feel, the nation should not tolerate any postponement of the polls. The rulers, sometimes, tend to prolong their stay in office by unethical means. By and large, the Indian democracy has adhered to this rule and except the Emergency aberration, the Parliament and the Assemblies have been elected in due time. Assam's turmoil has distorted this healthy practice and the state has, more or less, remained unrepresented in two successive Parliaments. The fake poll that put the Saikia government in power has indeed compromised the fair name of the Indian ballot box.

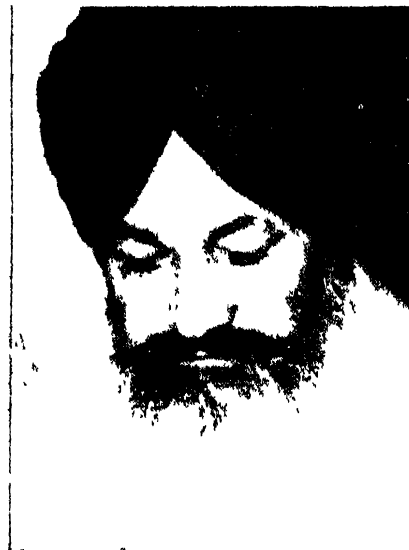
The dilemma in Punjab is rather extraordinary. The tormenting agitation has fractured the traditional Punjabi society. As is well known, the cultural interweave of the Hindus and the Sikhs is such that many families cannot survive without a cover of this fabric. And yet the strains have come both in social behaviour and political affiliations.

The Sikh polity, in pre-agitation days, backed the Akali Party selectively. The rich farming community particularly the Jats went with it. But the Nirankaris, the Radhaswamis, the Namdharis and Mazhabis (the Sikh harijans) usually supported the Congress.

On the Hindu side too there was inter-phasing. The erstwhile Jana Sangh (now the Bhartiya Janata Party) drew its sustenance from the Arya Samajis, the middle-level shopkeepers and some sections of the younger Hindu intelligentsia that had graduated through the RSS *shakhas*. Neither any significant section of the Sikhs nor the rural voters ever backed them. The appeal of the Congress—and later the Congress(I)—has been widely spread out both in the rural and the urban segments. That had made it durable.

But the process of the Akali agita-

tion changed all this. The urban Hindus felt insecure since the terrorists were hitting along the communal divide and the BJP, in the earlier phases, was unable to make up its mind. The local leaders had shared power with the Akalis and they still maintained cordial relations with the leaders like Sardar Prakash Singh Badal. By the time they decided to work out a policy posture, the Hindu polity had been splintered along unfamiliar lines. A series of Surakhsha Samities—mostly comprising the youth—came up in towns and cities. They did not have any coordinated thinking or centralised leadership. But they had progressively moved



Sant Longowal: quest for peace

away from the BJP. In their hour of distress they looked up to the Congress(I) but more specifically to Mrs Gandhi. They backed her when she was firm and moaned when she talked of healing the wounds.

Ironically, despite this favourable environment, the Congress(I), at the local level, was not able to consolidate its appeal amongst the Hindus for two reasons: one, the Congress(I) did not have any towering Punjabi Hindu in its ranks who could attract them. And in a highly communalised mood, they did not see much difference between the different shades of the Sikh turbans. Secondly, the local leadership of the party

was falling between the two stools of communal loyalty and the very thin venter of secularism.

As the agitation progressed, the Sikh masses—the non-Akali ones—now began to polarise around various factions of the Akalis. Operation Bluestar emanated a new psyche amongst them. Deeply hurt, they closed their ranks in a rather unprecedented way; whereas the youth picked up the blood-soaked banner of Bhindranwale, the others, inside Punjab, saw hope in the collective leadership of Longowal, Tohra and Badal. Some sectors of the intelligentsia—like Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora and Amrinder Singh of Patiala—also intervened to provide solace to the injured minds and bodies.

Within the Sikh polity, another struggle has emanated in the pre and post accord eras. Baba Joginder Singh heads a "United" Akali Dal composed of three heterogeneous elements: the erstwhile Badal supporters who are moderate in outlook and have defected because of the gurdwara elections, the Talwandi rump—that has a very limited base but is ideologically separatist—and the All India Sikh Students' Federation youth that is angry and frustrated.

It will be well nigh impossible for the aged leader to create a cohesive party out of this diversity which can make a mark in the coming elections. But it has an immense capacity to spoil the Akali prospects at the polls and embarrass Longowal.

The Sikh Students' Federation may not be active terrorists themselves, but their radical outlook can unsettle the accord. In the forthcoming Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee elections, their voice may tilt the balance. That is why both Badal and Tohra want to court this party without joining it.

The Longowal Akali Dal has proved its mettle. But in its hour of triumph it is faced with a split within its ranks. Mr Badal and Mr Tohra are men of stature and had made a worthwhile contribution in consolidating the moderate leadership. Though, in the pre-Operation Bluestar era, they failed to take charge of the boat that went into the

rough seas

In the era that began with their release from the jails the three of them have not shared perceptions of the situation. Sant Longowal's personality underwent a remarkable metamorphosis during his incarceration. Even though he groped for a while he acquired clarity of vision and a credible articulation. Once he came out of Punjab, in the end of April he saw for himself the desirability of emerging out of the narrow cocoon.

Prakash Singh Badal has a very rich background of administrative experience, a progressive outlook and sophisticated articulation. Though in many critical moments, he saw the pitfalls before his party, he refused to assert himself. As a matter of fact, sometimes he went along the road of irrationality—like burning Article 25 of the Constitution—even when he felt that it was not advisable. In the inner party factionalism he has been backed by a large majority of the MLAs and the better educated members of the party. On the other side of the fence the Punjabi Hindus trusted him more than any other Akali leader.

Tohra is a product of gurdwara politics. His peasant background has given him a very firm base in the organisation. He has been an important component of the party's collective leadership and has given it a firm footing since he has been an effective head of the gurdwara management committee of the SGPC. The trio together are a formidable combination. Though even in the best of times relations between the two—Badal and Tohra—have been less than amicable, the two had somehow agreed on Longowal's leadership.

The difficulty surfaced during the last election of the president of the SGPC. All three of them were in jail at that time. Longowal felt that it would be unwise to displace Tohra from his position as president of the SGPC particularly when he was the target of severe attack from the extremists and the authorities. So he backed him up to defeat a Badal supporter, S. Atma Singh who ironically also had covert support from some of the Punjab Congress leaders. The three drifted apart in a way that has brought Badal and Tohra closer to each other against Longowal—at least for the time being.

In this highly complex background, is it advisable to hold elections soon? A capsule view of the contemporary history of Punjab, makes one conclude that the eras of comparative stability always coincided with an overt or covert coalition between



Black flag-waving Baba Joginder Singh supporters trying to disrupt Longowal's visit to the Golden Temple on 30 July

the two communities, the Hindus and the Sikhs.

Before 1966—when Haryana and Punjab were not separated—the Congress derived its main support from the Hindi speaking region and the Akalis supported it by joining its ranks. Many leading Congress(I) Sikh leaders today, including Buta Singh, joined the ruling party during that period.

The Punjabi speaking areas of united Punjab had more or less a balanced Hindu Sikh population. A stable government emerged when the erstwhile adversaries—the Jana Sangh and the Akali Dal—formed a series of coalitions under the leadership of late Gurnam Singh and later Prakash Singh Badal. The Congress intervened unethically by either dismissing them or by inducing defections.

The Indira wave put Giani Zail Singh in power in 1972. To this single party tenure can be traced the emergence of Bhindranwale and the desecularisation of the Congress party inducing a long term instability. This history has one moral: Punjab badly needs a coalition government with an adequate participation by both the communities. A defined objective of the accord should aim at this. Even though it may be easy now

for the Congress(I) to win or for that matter even Akalis may triumph but the results, in either case, will be sad. In a polarised situation, the voting is likely to be on communal lines and therefore the campaigns will be highly vituperative. This can drown the spirit of the accord and bring out the latent aggressiveness again. The accord should be given some time to sink in and regenerate the traditional interdependence. Let us proceed slowly and go to polls only after a few months.

One more point needs rethinking for entirely partisan reasons, the second chamber of the Legislature was abolished in Punjab during the Gurnam Singh regime. The move was primarily motivated by the presence of a Congress led majority in the Council.

Upper Houses in State Legislatures are essential safeguards in the complex politics like Punjab. A revived Legislative Council will have some senior and sober voices in the Chamber. (The upper House was abolished in Punjab in 1967). Punjab badly needs the advice and intervention of its intellectuals, thinkers and the seniors who do not wish to go through the din of the elections, but can render yeoman service to rebuild a vigorous Punjabi unity.

Starvation in Kalahandi

An indifferent J.B. Patnaik government compounds the plight of the starving people in this drought-stricken district of Orissa

"There is no cause for concern," Orissa's revenue minister Jugal Kishore Patnaik told an agitated state Assembly on 18 July at the end of a stormy debate on the drought in Kalahandi district. At least 17 lives had, by then, perished in five blocks of the district—four in Komna, six in Bhawanipatna, four in Junagarh, two in Dharamgarh and one in Sinapali—

after days of starvation. What is more important, the minister was known to have visited at least two villages, Hatibandha in Sinapali block and Naktiguda in Junagarh block, where five deaths by starvation had already taken place by the middle of July. Though he was fully aware of the death of Ullas Meher, a 41 year old woman, which had occurred shortly before his visit to her

village, Hatibandha on 13 July, he tried to hush it up by paying Rs 300 to her family. Lest the surviving members of her family—one son and two daughters—be dissatisfied, the minister gave them 40 kg of rice, two kg of dal, one kg of salt, two *dhotis* and two saris. More inducements followed. One government official offered them Rs 1,500 on 24 July in full view of the Janata Party legislators of the district who were present in the village to assess the conditions of distress. There could not have been a more serious case of starvation death which the J.B. Patnaik government eagerly tried to cover up. Ullas's husband had already died of hunger five months earlier and their son, Lambodar Meher, and his two sisters were starving for days. Another son, Abhimanyu (22) had fled home and his whereabouts are still unknown. The father, prior to his death, had sold his hutment to a neighbour, Ananta Ram, for Rs 700 which sustained them for a couple of months. The starving family was now without a place for shelter. To add to the consternation of the Patnaik administration, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had included Sinapali block in his 27 July itinerary in Kalahandi district to have a first-hand knowledge of the drought situation.

The chief minister, J.B. Patnaik's designs were exposed during the Assembly discussions. He had visited Chhata village in Komna block on 20 July by which time as many as four deaths had taken place. He even visited the families of the victims. Yet, he had all along been silent during the House debates on the grim Kalahandi situation. Nor did he inform the Prime Minister about the deaths. The Prime Minister, whose sudden visit was prompted by reports of sale of babies by hungry mothers and relatives, was apparently not aware of the starvation deaths. His visit took place before the first reports about the deaths had trickled in. The chief minister would not have cared to rush to faraway



A starved family in Dhobei village in Boden block: untold misery

Meena Photo Studio

SPECIAL REPORT

Kalahandi on the morning of 20 July had the surprise message about the Prime Minister's programme not come in 16 hours earlier, leaving his entire administration unnerved. His revenue minister was forced to visit Kalahandi on 13 July only after he was repeatedly grilled in the Assembly on the Kalahandi situation. The issue of the sale of a baby which rocked the House on the opening day of its budget session on 3 July, showed no sign of abatement. In order to refute the allegation that he had not had an on-the-spot knowledge of the conditions of the people, the minister undertook the tour. Moreover, he had to face an irate opposition during the debate on the demands for grants for his department five days later, on 18 July. But both the revenue minister and the chief minister disowned responsibility for the starvation deaths. First, Jugal Kishore Patnaik played truant; he was not present in the Assembly when an adjournment motion was moved by the opposition demanding a debate on the deaths with the Speaker postponing it to 29 July, two days after the Prime Minister's visit. When the motion was finally discussed, the revenue minister and the chief minister rejected the starvation deaths as deaths due to diarrhoea and gastro-enteritis. The speaker, Prasanna Kumar Das, apparently disallowed the motion, thereby provoking the opposition members who later surged forward near his rostrum.



A starved woman from Mahulbhatta village

Deba Majhi (35) and his wife, Kamala (26), of Chhata village in Komna block of Kalahandi district, who lost both their sons—three-year-old Durbal and one-year-old Piladhar—would, however, not understand why the government was unwilling to admit that their babies had died of hunger. Starved for days,

Deba and Kamala had no other way of satisfying their crying hungry children than feed them with boiled wild roots, leaves and fruits collected from the forests nearby. "I was crying with him (pointing to the younger child) while forcing him to swallow the roots and leaves," said Kamala. Asked if she did not breast-feed the baby, a dazed Kamala, seated beside her husband who was too shocked to say anything, broke down putting a counter-question: How could that be possible when she had been starving for long, subsisting only on "dal, phal, mahul (wild leaves, fruits and roots and dried mahua flower which are boiled before eating)?"

One hears the same story from Devaki Majhi and her husband Pursotam Majhi, whose three-year-old daughter, Jamuna, died on 13 July, the day Kabi Majhi (31) lost his wife Tara Dei (25). Shortly afterwards, hunger robbed Balmati and her husband Kapur Rout of their three-and-a-half-year-old son, Budu, on 19 July while Topa Bewa, mother of Nanda Lal, a Harijan, died two days earlier, on 17 July.

The sad tale is repeated in other blocks of Kalahandi district. In Gola-munda village in Dharamgarh block, Rupadhar Durga (48) died in the first week of May after ten days of starvation leaving his wife, Ambika Bewa (45) to her own fate as the family had no one else to support the emaciated woman, suffering from acute malnutrition. Around the same time, 50-year-old Raghu Naik of the same village died of starvation. His wife, Biraja and physically handicapped daughter do not know as to how long they can stay away from the clutches of death.

"The J.B. Patnaik government is working overtime to explain away the deaths as those caused by diarrhoea than for taking measures to enable the rest of the dying masses to survive," said Bikram Keshari Deo, a Janata legislator from Kalahandi district. No one likes to eat harmful roots and leaves and invite diarrhoea and other stomach diseases resulting in deaths," he added. In fact, any visitor to the drought-hit areas can see famished men, women and children living in untold poverty, struggling against heavy odds. It is a sorry picture.

Malnutrition has reduced the villagers to human skeletons, with sunken eyes and faces and swollen bellies. The government officials, like Dr Negi in Komna block, concede the seriousness of the condition and wonder at their surviving power. The people live in huts which could hardly protect them from sun or rain and



Phanas Punji who sold her sister-in-law Banita : life for life

SPECIAL REPORT

are bereft of any belongings. The dresses the adults wear are just shreds of clothes; the women are no less better. The potbellied children roam about naked and mob visitors for food. With a government as insensible as ever it cannot be said for certain if many of them will be spared the cold touch of death in the coming months in the absence of a massive relief mobilisation.

An unofficial estimate puts the death toll at over one hundred by the end of July which, considering the vastness of the area and the large number of people affected, appears to be true. At least one-third of the district's population of over 13 lakhs living in eight blocks—Komna, Kharlar, Nawapara, Boden, Sinapali, Dharamgarh, Junagarh and Bhawanipatna—are in the grip of drought over the last three years.

The plight of the people in faraway Kalahandi bordering Madhya Pradesh hardly moves the administration at Bhubaneswar. Nor does it receive adequate media attention. The hunger strike by the young MLA from Bhawanipatna, Bhakta Charan Das, in May demanding immediate relief measures on a massive scale in the drought-hit areas was just not taken note of. Nor did his letters to the chief minister and the authorities evoke any response. This demand for bringing Kalahandi under central administration was pooh-poohed by the treasury benches. It was when the press followed up the Sarvodaya leader, Mrs Parbati Giri's statement

on the sale of babies by hungry mothers and relatives that the complacent Patnaik government sprung into action. It denied the sale of babies only to be humiliated later during the Prime Minister's visit when Rajiv Gandhi, in the presence of chief minister Patnaik, was told by Phanas Punji in her hutment at Amlapali village in Kharlar block that she had to sell her sister-in-law Banita (14) for Rs 40 for the survival of the rest of her family—herself and her two children: a son and a daughter.

The degrading poverty and governmental negligence could be fathomed from what Phanas Punji subsequently told newsmen: though she would very much like to, she would not sell her three-year-old daughter now; she would do it when the girl was grown up and would fetch a higher price. The struggle for existence has hardened the hearts of mothers like Rama Gahir of Mahara-jor village in Boden block who betray no emotion while depositing their babies with strangers, whether at a price or free of cost.

Utter poverty has ruined families with the husbands having left their young wives for far-off places in search of jobs, never to return. First came the news of an Adivasi girl, Jhimti Majhi, from Kiribeda village in Kharlar block, whose husband Harichandra (Mangalu) Majhi left her shortly after their marriage. She was abducted and sold at Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesh, but managed to escape with another girl of her area who had met a similar fate, according

to the village *chowkidar*, Ghana Mahananda. Meanwhile, several reports of husbands deserting their homes to seek means of livelihood elsewhere but never returning are pouring in. Three such cases have been received from Hatibandha village in Sinapali block. Twenty-year-old Dhanmati is left to fend for herself and her two-year-old child, her husband having disappeared for the last one year. The whereabouts of Gurubari Harijan, husband of Pata Dei, are yet unknown since one-and-a-half years. Pata Dei and her two-year-old baby are now half-starved. Shakuntala Bhoi, mother of a six-month-old baby, was happy when her husband left home two months ago to search for a job which would sustain the family. But she is now faced with an uncertain future with no trace of her husband's whereabouts.

Thousands of people have been leaving their villages and working as rickshawpullers and bonded labourers in other states, particularly Madhya Pradesh. The state government which has failed to provide them employment in their own land is under the impression that they are well-off elsewhere. The revenue minister stated in the Assembly that those working as rickshawpullers in Raipur, Madhya Pradesh, earn a "good living." The assumption, however, runs counter to what the people say about the hard life they lead in other states to keep the wolf from the door. The story of bonded labourers is shocking. Said Lakshman Singh Thakur and Baishnab Bag of Badi village in Kharlar block, "We had to run away from Pathankot (Jammu and Kashmir) 25 days after we reached there. A longer stay would have meant death. Seven of us went to Pathankot through an agent at Sindhekela (in bordering Bolangir district). We had to do earthwork from six in the morning to six in the evening. We were paid nothing. We were only given food which hardly satisfied our hunger. We were lodged in a room made of tin and had not bathed for all the 25 days." The remaining five who went with them were also planning to escape from the clutches of the Pathankot employer, they said. And all this had happened in the constituency (Kharlar) of Anup Singh Deo, the state's labour minister, notwithstanding the repeated claims by the government about several measures for the rehabilitation of bonded labourers. The labour market of Raipur is shrinking for the Kalahandi people since the local people there have begun attacking the migrants whose presence in large numbers has reduced the amount of daily wages.



Women from Dhubel village who have lost their eyesight due to malnutrition

SPECIAL REPORT



(Left) Deba Majhi and his wife, Kamala, whose two children died of starvation within a week; (right) Devaki Majhi, whose three-year-old daughter Jamuna died of starvation: no end to their woes

The agonising situation in Kalahandi district is not the result of the last three years' drought alone. Since a large part of the district is in

the rain-shadow zone, it is affected by perpetual drought. Revenue records show that severe drought struck the area in 1897, 1902, 1919 and 1930. The worst drought, which assumed the proportions of a famine, hit Kalahandi in 1966 when hundreds of people died of starvation. The then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, visited the area following which a series of development schemes, particularly irrigation projects, were mooted. But as the Lok Sabha MP from Kalahandi, Jagannath Patnaik, told SUNDAY, none of the irrigation projects, except the medium Sundar project, had been implemented during the last two decades. Had all the proposed projects—Indra, Udanti and Upper Jonk—been completed more than 1.60 lakh acres of land could have been irrigated. Further, the implementation of the Sundar project had been left incomplete resulting in irrigation facility for only about 50 per cent of the total land (4,000 hectares), he said. The large upper Indravati project, located in the neighbouring Koraput district, which was scheduled to have irrigated a large part of Kalahandi from this year, is yet to be com-

pleted. Considering the snail's pace at which the project is being implemented, one wonders if it can be completed even by the end of the present century.

If God had been unkind to Kalahandi in depriving it of rains, the government has been no less cruel to its people in denying them the minimum water to irrigate their land. The people have no other place to go since the district practically has no industry to support a sizeable part of its population. Surprisingly, the district, which has only one sick vegetable oil unit is classified as an industrially backward area and not as a "no industry district." While the latter classification could have entitled the entrepreneurs to a subsidy of 25 per cent, the former enables them to get a subsidy of 15 per cent. With infrastructural facilities like road and rail communications remaining poor, entrepreneurs do not venture forward to set up industries in the district.

The communication problem has contributed to the dwindling economy of Kalahandi. The block headquarters of Sinapali and Boden have no road links with their subdivisional headquarters at Nawapara. The 70 km Khariar-Nawapara road has eight causeways which are inaccessible during the rainy season. The Sambal-

pur-Bhawanipatna road has remained useless since 1976 because a bridge over the river Tel has not been repaired, resulting in disruption of direct communication links between Kalahandi and the major growth centres of western Orissa like Sambalpur and Rourkela. People living on the other side of the river Sundar in Komna block cannot reach the block headquarters, only eight km away, during the rains as there is no bridge. The foundation stone of the bridge was laid in 1981 with much fanfare but there is yet no sign of it being constructed. With the posts of 79 doctors, 71 lady health visitors, 67 auxiliary midwives and 28 sanitary inspectors lying vacant in the district and almost all dispensaries having run out of drugs, one can well imagine the fate of the patients. The political leadership of western Orissa which includes Kalahandi, being weak and ineffective, and the spread of education being very slow, the level of consciousness of the people of Kalahandi, with about 50 per cent of the population consisting of Adivasis and Harijans, is low. The first college in the district was established at its headquarters at Bhawanipatna only in 1960. There are in all eight colleges now, including only one government college. Thuramul-Rampur block, with a population of 50,000, had its first high school in

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The people do not know how to assert their rights or are even unaware of them. They had fallen at the feet of Indira Gandhi two decades ago to save them from death, they made the same gesture to her son, Rajiv Gandhi, and his wife, Sonia, when they visited them on 27 July. Desperate in their struggle for survival they took the Prime Minister and his wife as their saviours. The elusive rations, which appeared in the fair price shops on the eve of the Prime Minister's visit, were the result of the benevolence of the PM and not because of any sincere effort on the part of the administration to solve their problems. The people do not know that the government could spend only Rs 87 lakhs out of Rs 166 lakhs earmarked for the National Rural Employment Programme (NRLP) and Rs 69.36 lakhs out of Rs 127.46 lakhs allotted under the Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) for the district during 1984-85. And as per the government's own admission earlier, much of the funds has been misappropriated. They do not know that the post of SDO at the worst hit Nawapara subdivision was lying vacant for over two months till a new incumbent assumed charge two days before the Prime Minister's visit.

The much vaunted anti-poverty programmes have dealt a final blow to the people's economic backbone instead of improving their conditions. Said Lalsagan Harijan of Mahulbharta village in Komna block: "All the eight sheep I got through bank loans died six months after their purchase. The veterinary doctors did not come to attend on the diseased animals. The banks have been serving notices on me to repay Rs 695, including interest. I have earlier paid Rs 100, no more loan is available to me as I am called a defaulter." Arikhit Bag of Amlapali village in Khariar block complained: "A bank loan is being shared before disbursement. The babus are writing in our passbooks a loan of Rs 1,500 when they are actually paying Rs 1,000."

Biranchi Punji of Amlapali, a Congress(I) worker, declared the "final decision" of the villagers: "All of us will leave the village if the government does not consider our plight. We brought loans in the shape of rice and cash from Mahajans (money lenders) in Bhalumunda (in bordering Bolangir district) in 1957 and 1958. Because of successive drought, we could not repay the loans and, instead, sold all our landed properties to the Mahajans. Our woeful condi-

tions were known to the government in 1966 when the worst drought hit us. We were asked to take loans from the State Bank of India and cooperative banks (under anti-poverty schemes). But because of perpetual drought conditions, we are unable to repay the loans nor are we given fresh loans." As Jagannath Patnaik, MP, said, at least 60 per cent of the people of Kalahandi were defaulters with various banks, having lost their claim to raise fresh loans.

The feeling of utter unconcern on the part of most of the elected representatives of the area is being slowly realised by the people. A section of the crowd at Rajiv Gandhi's public meeting near Nawapara shouted that the PCC(I) president, Nityananda Mishra, who represents their area in Parliament, had never cared to visit them after the last elections. The Prime Minister had to pacify them.



Bhakta Charan Das: loud protests

saying, "Hum to aye hain (at least I have come)." What the Prime Minister saw in Kalahandi was abject poverty notwithstanding J.B. Patnaik's claim that out of 68 per cent of the state's population who lived below the poverty line in 1980, 30 per cent were raised above that level and that the rest 38 per cent would no longer remain poor after 1990. One only had to witness the embarrassment of Patnaik when hungry people with tattered clothes and stark naked children mobbed the Prime Minister wherever he went in Kalahandi. No wonder, a section of the Prime Minister's audience at Nawapara demanded a change in the state's leadership.

The people and various organisations, who first had the courage to highlight the plight of Kalahandi, are being victimised by the administration. Kapil Narain Tiwari, a former

MLA of Khariar, is being harassed by the policemen who visit his house in his absence and ask his wife all sorts of questions. The image of Mrs Parbati Giri, the Sarvodaya leader of Sambalpur district, was sought to be tarnished by the revenue minister in the Assembly. The minister also did not spare the members of the OX FAM and the Khariar-based Jagrat Sangh holding them responsible for "trying to exploit the people and carrying on an anti-government campaign." The Kalahandi collector, in his letter of 16 July, has threatened action against the Jagrat Sangh if it does not produce its accounts books. The Sangh leaders are wondering what more papers they should submit as they have been regularly furnishing audited accounts. "Will all this stop or the people will be motivated to establish a parallel government in Kalahandi?" asked Bhakta Charan Das, MLA, a staunch believer in Jayaprakash Narain's ideals.

The propounder of a parallel government in Kalahandi, Bhakta Charan Das gave vent to his feelings when he hurled his microphone at the treasury benches on the night of 31 July after the revenue minister, Jagal Kishore Patnaik, finally declared at the end of a four and a half hour debate on the Kalahandi situation that the conditions were not serious in that drought-stricken area. "I just lost all senses when the arrogant minister refused to be moved by the tragic stories of hunger and death in my district. The chief minister who accompanied the Prime Minister and saw the heart-rending conditions of the people for himself, maintained an unpardonable silence in the House. The faces of the dead and dying masses took possession of my mind and propelled me to throw the missile at the liars sitting opposite me." Das, who has a background of a long struggle under the banner of Yuba Chhatra Sangharsha Bahini, told SUNDAY "I shall resign my membership of the Legislature if it does not serve the purpose of serving the people whom I represent," he declared.

Said Balgopal Mishra (Ind), another angry, rebellious legislator from Bolangir district which borders Kalahandi: "What feeling of sympathy towards the dead and the hungry could we expect from a criminal government when the chief minister throws a royal dinner party for the MLAs just after the debate on the starvation deaths in Kalahandi? More shocking is the sense of judgement of the Speaker who is not prepared to admit even an adjournment motion on the calamitous situation in Kalahandi."

Assam: Accord in Sight

Shillong talks raise hopes for a settlement, reports Seema Guha

The official level talks held between the Assam movement leaders and union home secretary R.D. Pradhan on 29 and 30 July at the Shillong Raj Bhavan ended on a positive note, raising hopes that a final settlement of the Assam imbroglio is round the corner.

After two days of substantive talks between the union home secretary and the agitation leaders led by All Assam Students Union (AASU) president Prafulla Mahanta and general secretary Bhriugu Phukan, both sides expressed satisfaction with the fruitful nature of the discussion and indicated that the progress achieved in Shillong would be followed up with a final settlement in New Delhi before 15 August. The Shillong discussions had begun on a sour note with the movement leaders disappointed that the negotiations were not being held at a political level. There was, however, unconcealed excitement in the AASU camp at the end of the discussions. This indicates that some sort of informal understanding had been reached during the talks. Speaking to the press immediately afterwards, Prafulla Mahanta said, "We are hopeful that a solution to the Assam problem will be worked out soon." Both sides refused to comment on the exact nature of the discussions, with the AASU maintaining that premature publicity could scuttle the negotiations. Bhriugu Phukan, however, said that the majority of their demands would be

met. Asked if dissolution of the Assam Assembly was one of them, Mr Phukan categorically stated: "This has been our principal demand."

The AASU stand on the fate of the Saikia ministry and the present Assam Assembly has never varied. Since the inception of the Congress(I) government in Assam after the violent Assembly elections, the movement leaders had refused to recognise what they termed as the "illegal ministry." Though the Supreme Court had given a clean chit to the Saikia government and despite the fact that the boycott of the government called by AASU was never seriously followed up even by their supporters, most people in the state agree that the last Assembly election was a farce, conducted with scant respect to any democratic convention. The dissolution of the Assembly has now become a prestige issue with the students, and they privately say that while they are willing to adopt a give-and-take stand on other issues they are formally committed to the dissolution of the present House. According to AASU insiders, the Assam issue cannot be solved without the dismissal of the present ministry and the dissolution of the Assembly.

Going by the AASU's oft-repeated public stand on the Hiteswar Saikia government, it is logical to expect that the solution of the Assam problem is directly linked with the survival or otherwise of the present Dispur

administration. Another point where AASU cannot afford to agree with the centre is the 1971 cut-off date. The AASU leaders had emphatically repeated in Shillong that they would not agree to take 1971 as the cut-off year even if this was followed up with the dissolution of the ministry. But it is certain that despite the AASU's public stand that 1961 should be the cut off date, the student leaders are willing to negotiate and come to an agreement on some year between 1961 and 1971. The possible alternatives are 1966 or 1967. Even if they wanted to, the students cannot commit themselves to 1971 without evoking a violent reaction from their own supporters.

The AASU today is no longer in its former position of strength. The Assam movement which had at one time taken such proportions that it shook the entire socio-political fabric of the state, has today long gone past its zenith. The AASU leaders are under pressure from every side, including substantial numbers of their own supporters to either continue the movement or reach an honourable agreement with the centre. Compromise on many of the basic issues would be looked upon as a sell-out by many of their followers. The students who now fully realise that the centre cannot concede to many of their original demands, want to back up whatever concessions they get from New Delhi. The dissolution of the Assam Assembly could give them a face-saving device out of their present predicament. Unless they can do this after hundreds of lives have been sacrificed during the Assembly elections, the present AASU leadership would be in no position to face its own people. The other alternative before AASU is to renew the movement with the same intensity as it had done earlier. However, though support for the AASU cause is still very evident, it is unlikely that the former enthusiasm could again be revoked. Besides, with chief minister Hiteswar Saikia at the helm of affairs, launching another movement would not be easy for the students. Though the AASU had informed the union home secretary that unless a solution to the

AASU president Prafulla Mahanta (second from right) at a conference in 1984



SPECIAL REPORT

Assam problem was found before 15 August this year it would relaunch the agitation, it is unrealistic to suppose that the student leaders are in a position to do so right away

The only alternative before the movement leaders is a negotiable settlement, where much will depend on what the centre is willing to concede. According to informed sources, the cut off date discussed so far has been 1967. On the question of the period of disenfranchisement too the differences have been narrowed. While earlier the students had insisted on 20 years and the government on five, a likely period between seven to ten years is being negotiated now. However, the important question is the dissolution of the Assembly without which no agreement can be signed.

While dissolving the Assam Assembly and calling for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the Assembly seems to be the only path



Hiteswar Saikia hopeful

to a solution, the fortunes of the Congress(I) in the state are at stake. There is tremendous pressure from the local Congress(I) and the chief minister to dissolve the present Assembly. The partymen point out that the entire minority base of the Congress(I), which had stood the party in good stead all through these years would be destroyed at one stroke if the Assembly was not dissolved. According to influential minority leaders of the Assam cabinet, the minorities who have already been let down by adopting 1971 as the base year for the revision of electoral rolls, could never again trust the Congress(I) if the cut off year is pushed back to 1967. The minorities had also voted the Congress(I) government to power after much sacrifice. If the Assembly has to be dissolved, large sections of

minorities would forever be alienated from the ruling party.

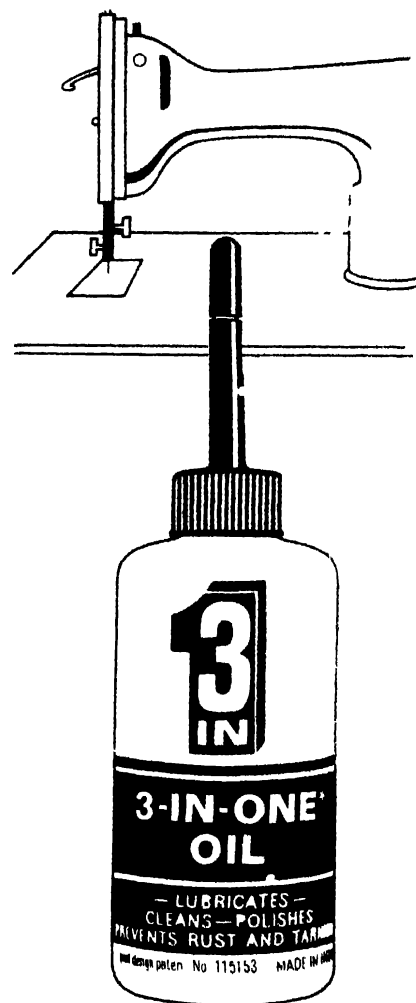
However, despite the Congress(I) assertion, it is not a fact that the minorities are unanimously committed to the continuation of the present Assembly. If the cut off date is not pushed back and 1971 agreed on, the minorities are not averse to the dissolution of the Assembly and the holding of fresh Assembly elections. Perhaps many among the present crop of MLAs would not be returned, but this does not mean that minorities would shift their loyalty from the Congress(I).

According to Congress(I) ministers and legislators, party president Rajiv Gandhi had assured them that while working out a solution to the Assam issue he would keep the ultimate good of the party in mind. Minority delegations like All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) have also been assured by the home ministry that the interests of all sections of people living in Assam would be considered before arriving at a solution. As the Congress(I)'s policy in the north eastern states since 1980 has been to woo the alienated sections and work in close cooperation with them, like the Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in Nagaland, the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TJUS) in Tripura, it is reasonable to expect that the party will try to come to some form of compromise with the agitation leaders. If a political understanding is reached between the movement leaders and electoral adjustments are made between the leaders of the Assam agitation and the state Congress(I), chances of an early election for both the Lok Sabha and the state Assembly are bright.

However, while it is certain the movement leaders will contest the next elections, it is not yet known whether they can work in an alliance with the state party even behind the scenes. The agitationists may put up their candidates who will be indirectly helped by the Congress(I), or the Congress(I) may leave some seats for the agitationists. Whether the movement leaders will dare to openly cohort with the Congress(I) still remains to be seen. A final settlement of the Assam problem seems to be inextricably linked with the vote banks of the Congress(I). If the high command feels that by giving certain concessions to the majority community it can win back its base among them, then the chief minister may well step down, dissolve the Assembly and call for fresh elections, paving the way for a settlement.

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Major-general F.D. Larkins (Retd) being led away by the police after the judgement

Two Generals are Jailed

Larkins brothers get ten-year prison sentences for spying

Major general I. D. Larkins (Retired) looked up at his wife and said "Why is that paper torn?" Mrs Larkins held the torn end of notebook paper in her thin trembling hand. She replied "I was covering my face with it when the photographers started clicking. I told them that I was not Mrs Coomar Narain." It was shortly after two in the afternoon on 24 July. The judgement had been pronounced in the Larkins' espionage case in the court of K. B. Andley, convicting the four accused: Major general I. D. Larkins (Retired), Air vice marshal (Retired) K. H. Larkins, Lt Colonel Jasbir Singh and Jaspal Singh Gill. When their sentences were passed, the elder Larkins collapsed in a chair. His hands clutched the cloth bag of papers and sweat poured down his face.

The younger of the Larkins brothers, AVM K. H. Larkins, sat a short distance away with his sister. His face had paled, but he retained his stiff officer's bearing. (This was the man who on the first day of the trial when asked how he was had said "My shoes are still shining.") "Normally it is a pleasure to meet young women, but today I have nothing to say. Who am I to judge? They have nothing against me; it is all political," he said to reporters present in the courtroom on the day of the judgement. K. H. Larkins is around ten years younger than his brother, but he looked a lot older. "I have lost ten kilos in jail. I have aged, as you can see, I suffer from the malabsorption syndrome. The air force must have the thickest file of medical documents on me." There was more resignation than anger in the

voice of the former air force officer who spent his time in Tihar jail—when not cooking his special diet of *aloo ki sabzi*—teaching his jailmate Ranjit Singh, the alleged assassin of the Nirankari Baba Gurbachan Singh, yoga and English.

The third roommate was the elder Larkins whose response to the conviction was one of utter disbelief. "Sorry, if I cannot say anything to you," he told this correspondent, "it is just that I expected to be home today. I collapsed, as you can see, into the chair on hearing the conviction but I will be alright. It was after all a bolt from the blue."

The next bolt came when the sentences were delivered: ten years' rigorous imprisonment for the Larkins brothers and Jasbir Singh for passing on classified information to a foreign country. Jaspal Singh Gill

was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1,000. This time, however, the retired Major general did not collapse into the chair, "I have recovered. We will appeal to the High Court and the Supreme Court if need be." Both the brothers with distinguished careers in the service could not get over the fact that their service record and fragile health had not spared them. Said the Major general "I was given the PVSM (Param Vishisht Seva Medal) immediately after the 1971 war. It was not some award given across the breakfast table on 26 January. It is the highest award in the Indian army and I have four letters from the chiefs of the army about my character—and this is what I get in the end."

Nor did he think he would survive the term in prison. "I have diabetes, an abnormality in one artery and angina. In fact, I was in hospital for two and a half months last year, I needed an operation but they did not perform one. Perhaps, I would not have survived."

The ten year sentences had stunned the four accused into silence. So were the lawyers. One of the defence counsels asked her colleague "Don't you feel aggrieved to see such old people getting sentenced?" The younger colleague thought for a moment and said "You know what I tell myself, my conscience really, that the matter is *sub judice* and that is that." After the sentences had been delivered, K H Larkins walked over to prosecution counsel, Mr Handa, and said, extending his hand "What does one say to a man who has just won a case?" The prosecution counsel replied "There is no question of winning or losing. Your counsel did his duty and the court has delivered the verdict. There is another round of silence and the prosecution counsel looked visibly moved, as did his colleague, Anjana Chaturvedi."

While Jasbir Singh appeared composed, it was clear that he is only putting up a soldier's brave front. He looked the most angry of the four. "I suppose the word for us could be scapegoats; they thought we were part of a big ring in defence. But only those who are in positions could be. Just imagine, in the library are these ladies who are in positions of clerks—these are the people who are supposed to be holding something dangerous to the country. Section 3-C is a British Act of 1923. Anybody seen snooping round the docks or South Block could be taken in. It has not been revised since then." His wife and son broke down in court after the sentence was passed and it was Jasbir Singh who had to console



Air Marshal K.H. Larkins (Retd) after the trial. sportsmanship was not dampened

them. The elder Larkins' wife, nervously opened and closed her hand bag or occupied herself with the tiffin and thermos flask she had brought for her husband. Her husband said his main worry was his wife. "Who will look after her? She has cancer and the landlord wants to throw her out. My sons are abroad." He insisted that he had nothing to do with espionage. "I stayed miles away from foreigners when I was with the works and equipment division for four and a half years. If I had to spy, surely I would have done it, then, when I had the opportunity. Why should I sell my country now and for what?"

For his younger brother the greatest problem was the separation from his family. A few moments before the four were escorted back to judicial custody, K H Larkins became more reflective when asked what he planned to do next? "When I get up tomorrow morning, a little earlier than I do every day, I will

have to begin to retrieve a situation which is now beyond my control. I did not think that I would be given such a sentence, I had planned to start teaching English once I was out of jail. Now I might not survive. You know I have a very pretty wife, well, she is 55 but for me she is pretty. And I have a beautiful daughter who is doing so well in Australia."

Later, when someone questioned him about his life in jail, he said, "I think a lot. I have been reading." Was he close to his brother? "No, not really. But, in Tihar jail we have come a little closer."

He could not have long discussions with his other room mate Ranjit Singh. "You can't talk about the big things in life to a killer. He is a real professional." By then it was three in the afternoon and the sensational Larkins case had come to a quiet end, edged out from the next morning's headlines by the accord on Punjab.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

"Bhajan Lal Enquiry is a Farce"

The opposition expresses resentment over the way the corruption charges against the Haryana CM are being probed

The "enquiry" into the corruption charges against Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal is taking a strange course. Even a week after the announcement of the "probe," it was still not clear what the terms of reference of the "enquiry" were or what precisely was the task of Justice Jaswant Singh who has been appointed to conduct the "probe." Indeed it seems that the term "enquiry" in this case is a misnomer for there is no probe being conducted. From all available information, Jaswant Singh, a retired Supreme Court judge, is simply there to see whether there exists a *prima facie* case against Bhajan Lal. It is not, as the opposition had demanded, an enquiry instituted under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, 1952. Opposition circles in the capital are

already dismissing the Jaswant Singh enquiry as a "farce."

Doubts have also been raised about how impartially Justice Jaswant Singh can conduct the "probe." Some opposition leaders, especially those who have followed Bhajan Lal's political career for some time, say that Justice Jaswant Singh's appointment to head the enquiry has been "manipulated" by a lobby close to the Prime Minister which has constantly been working for Bhajan Lal. This influential group includes Rajiv Gandhi's political advisor, Makhan Lal Fotedar and former union minister for petroleum, P Shiv Shankar. It is interesting to note that after the personnel department had gone through the 42-page memorandum presented to the Prime Minister by senior opposition leaders on 4 July

the documents were passed on to P. Shiv Shankar for his perusal. Considering that Shiv Shankar holds no official position, political circles in New Delhi find it strange that his comments were taken into consideration by the government of India. Some opposition leaders feel that the memorandum itself is "convincing and supported by enough documentary evidence" to initiate a *prima facie* case against Bhajan Lal. There is no need for the papers to travel through so many hands before a proper enquiry is instituted. The centre, it is felt, is dilly-dallying on the Bhajan Lal affair.

Justice Jaswant Singh, who has also been entrusted with the job of going through the memorandum, was at one time the advocate-general of Jammu and Kashmir and later be



The shop run by Bhajan Lal's sons in Adampur Mandi

"What Corruption?"

Bhajan Lal defends his son-in-law

Q: Why is there so much talk of your son-in-law?

A: Just because he is Bhajan Lal's son-in-law. The opposition has been trying hard to find something against me for years. Now, this is also one of their vague efforts.

Q: But don't you think that your son-in-law has suddenly become an important man?

A: Why all of a sudden. He was always important. His family has a history of at least 500 years.

Q: It is said that your son-in-law has become rich in just three years—that is after he married your daughter.

A: Yeh to bilkul baseless hai (It is totally baseless). Wo aaj se ameer nahin ho gaya, 500 saal se ameer hai (He has not become rich today; his family has been well-off for over 500 years now).

Q: You mean he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth?

A: Golden spoon ki baat karo ji (No, a golden spoon.) His grandfather was Tarachand who owned six aeroplanes in the days when people could not think of buying cycles.

Q: Much has been written against your son-in-law's sudden rise as an industrialist?

A: Those who have said so are indulging in mud-slinging after lending their ears to the opposition. Civil and criminal cases against them have been registered.

Q: But isn't it true that your

son-in-law and his family members have become chairmen and directors in around 14 companies.

A: Jo kuch bhi yeahain sab kanun ke tahad hai (Whatever they have done is within the rules).

Q: What have you to say about the memorandum which the opposition has presented to the PM?

A: This memorandum has political overtones. The opposition has only one aim and that is to remove me from office. In any case nothing



Bhajan Lal: understanding father-in-law

new has been said in the memorandum. The enlisted charges are all the same as those raised in the Assembly.

Q: What do you say about these charges?

A: I have already given detailed explanations on the floor of the House. I think records speak louder than any justification given by me.

Q: Has the Prime Minister spoken to you about the memorandum?

A: I have received no communication from the Prime Minister.

Q: Your son-in-law has allegedly imported very costly machinery at very low prices to secure facilities given to small units.

A: Business ka usool is se ulta hai. Businessman layga cheeze thode paise ki aur baravaega ziada paise ki (Business principles are just the opposite. A businessman will buy things for much less than he quotes to the public). So why would my son-in-law buy costly machinery and quote less? The units are not in the small scale but in a medium scale industries.

Q: There has been a lot of talk about corruption at the stone-crushing unit in Faridabad...

A: What corruption? When I took over as chief minister, its income was only Rs five to six lakhs but today it is Rs five to six crores.

Interviewed by Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

came a judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court before joining the Supreme Court. All through, it is said, he has been close to Makhan Lal Fotedar. He retired from the Supreme Court in 1979. He has been known as a close confidant of Makhan Lal Fotedar, the political aide of Mrs Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. The role of the Fotedar camp in toppling the Farooq Abdullah government last year is too well-known. As a person who has links with the Fotedar circle, Justice Jaswant Singh's name is also linked to the group in Delhi which planned the July 1984 coup in Srinagar. And this makes his name unacceptable to the opposition leaders.

Ever since the opposition leaders presented their memorandum to the Prime Minister, the Haryana chief minister has been spending more

**Justice Jaswant Singh
(who has been appointed
to conduct the probe)
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time in New Delhi than in Chandigarh. Camping in the capital's Haryana Bhawan, the wily Bhajan Lal has directed operations against his detractors. While politically he

has lobbied with the highest in the land in an attempt to turn the tide in his favour, Bhajan Lal's bureaucrats have launched a massive propaganda campaign. The Haryana government's public relations department in New Delhi has been working overtime to convince the press about the "constructive role of Bhajan Lal in the nation's politics" and the malicious intentions "of the national opposition." Bhajan Lal had initially began an anti-opposition tirade by claiming that it was part of an Akali plot to dislodge him. Now that the Punjab accord has been clinched and he himself has had to welcome it, Bhajan Lal must find himself in a fix. Now he is trying to convince everyone that the opposition is trying to malign him to hide the skeletons in its own cupboard!

Sanjiv Thakur, New Delhi

Shiv Sena's 'Marathi Mumbai'

The campaign to make Bombay beautiful—the Maratha way

On 20 July, the Bombay municipal corporation (BMC) issued a statement appealing to the public through the press not to "deface, damage, uproot or carry away the English language signboards." The note explained that English signboards were installed keeping in mind the visitors from other states as well as those from abroad. It said the installation of these green road signs formed a part of an endeavour to beautify and improve the city's main roads and to ensure better guidance to motorists. Citizens were further assured that the administration would be providing road signs in Marathi along with those presently in English. The BMC's clarification came a few days after Shiv Sena activists had neatly blackened out the English signboards indicating directions to the BARC, Nariman Point, the airport and the Gateway of India. Most of the signboards that were blackened were in Dadar, Parel and Lalbaug, the strongholds of the Shiv Sena.

Since the Shiv Sena captured 74 of the 170 seats in the Bombay municipal corporation elections in a spectacular victory at the height of the Rajiv Gandhi wave, getting signboards painted in Marathi on every restaurant, shop, theatre and public place has been their most successful campaign. In fact, shortly after the Shiv Sena mayor was elected, one of the first announcements made by Manohar Joshi, a former mayor and one of the party leaders, was that all names should be written in Marathi in addition to the other language already existing. This had to be done in eight days or else.

As mayor Chhagan Bhujbal explained, "In every city you visit, signboards are in that state's language, be it Madras, Calcutta or Bangalore. Neither I nor my party invented the linguistic states. They are a political reality. So why should Marathi not be given its rightful place in Bombay which is the capital of Maharashtra?" The mayor set the pace by popularising his slogan, "*Sunder Mumbai, Marathi Mumbai*," on hoardings in different parts of the city. While this has raised eyebrows in several quarters, most people have fallen in line with at least the second

part of the slogan. Marathi will also be used in all official correspondence. In the corporation itself quite a few councillors were heckled for not speaking in Marathi. Apart from this success, the Shiv Sena has not had much luck with its "*Sunder Mumbai*" campaign primarily because it has no programme, says Mr N K Khandilkar, editor of *Navakar* and the intellectual mentor of the Shiv Sena. However, the mayor says that they have already started clean-

ing up the house lanes which had not been cleaned for more than five years because they did not come within the purview of the corporation rules.

One of the major policy statements of the mayor is his decision to hand over the beautification of gardens in the city to private companies. There are about 140 virgin plots to be developed as gardens in the city and suburbs. Dr David Pinto, the 'A' ward officer, says that in his ward he has already given 13 out of 14 gardens and 23 of the 26 traffic islands for beautification to private organisations. The Tatas, for instance, are developing Horniman Circle garden into a formal garden on the lines of London's Regent Square and a few gardens in Paris. They will plant about 400 more trees, have a fountain and an 'old people's corner, student's corner and children's corner'. They will also add more lights on the imposing steps of the Town Hall central library opposite the garden where generations of poor students who have no proper homes have been studying for decades. In all, the private sector is spending some three crores of rupees in the 'A' ward towards the beautification programme, said Pinto, who has been working closely with them. The mayor wants to make the 'A' ward a model for all the other 170 wards in the city to follow.

However, making a policy decision is one thing and implementing them another. The party's policy in the corporation is formulated by a task force which includes, besides Bal Thackeray, senior leaders like Pramod Navalkar, Datta Nalavade, Ramesh Prabhu, Manohar Joshi and Sudhir Joshi. The sainiks are given orders and they just obey, said one young corporator. On programmes other than tree planting, problems arise because the implementing agencies are the municipal commissioner, Jamshed Kanga, and the people under him. According to BMC watchers, the only effective man is Mr Ramamurthi who accompanies the mayor on his surprise visits. In fact, since Mr Kanga assumed office he has been intimidated by the elite and has even put a halt to the

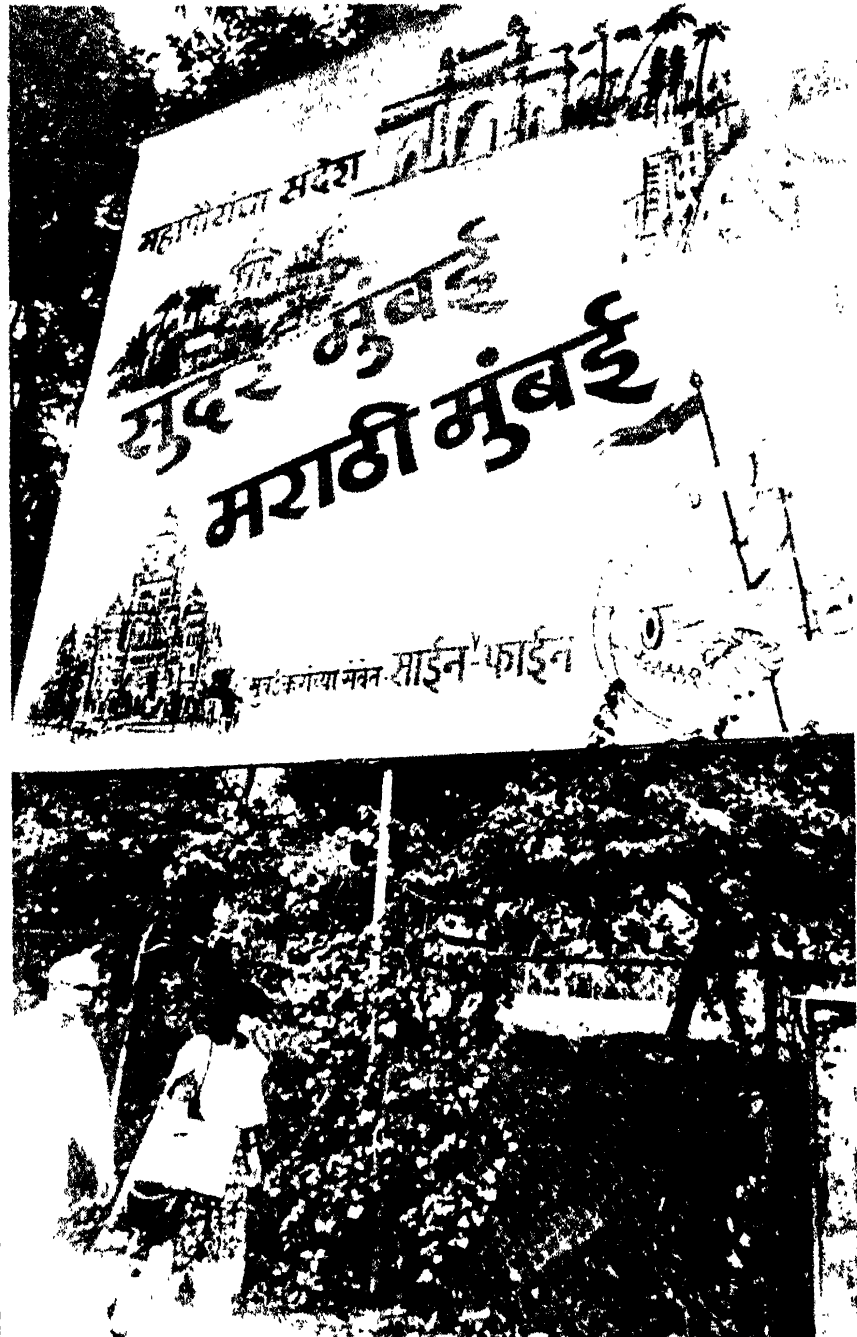


demolition of structures like "Pratibha" which has eight illegal floors. He knows he will be transferred like his predecessor, D.M. Sukhtankar if he treads on the toes of the rich.

The Shiv Sena's rule in the corporation has coincided with the floods that the city faced in June. Waterlogging took place even when there were no heavy rains, affecting industry and trade. It is estimated that people lost a total of Rs 200 crores. The floods raised two important issues: whether the Shiv Sena could control the civic administration and whether it was interested in rooting out corruption. As Sharad Rao, who heads the Municipal Mazdoor Unions says, "The civic administration is responsible for the mess of waterlogging due to its negligence, wrong planning and built-in corruption." For instance, points out Rao, with the help of the World Bank, the BMC has already spent over Rs 200 crores on underground sewerage mostly in the suburbs. This was wasted because the landlords did not connect the sewerage lines to the main drainage line, which is a cognisable offence but the BMC officials have not prosecuted them including the housing board for reasons best known to them. Manholes in all these residential complexes are now opened and on normal days the drains are clogged in the suburbs.

Rao also alleges that the civic administration has not filled up more than 5,000 vacancies in the conservancy department. In each ward there are about 100 posts in the drainage department, but there are only about 50 staffers. Under the direction of the municipal commissioner more and more work is given to contractors resulting in mass corruption at all levels of the BMC. Contractors have to pay about 35 per cent of the contractual cost to BMC officials right from getting the contract till the clearance of money, alleges Rao.

However, till the present, the Shiv Sena has shown no signs of taking a firm grip on the administration. That they intend to at some stage, is evident in Pramod Navalkar's assertion that since the Sena now controls the corporation the partymen will be in a position to stop the influx of non-Maharashtrians into the city. Their underlying theme, which incidentally is the same tune that the elite class from the Nani Palkhivalas to Nana Chudasamas sing, is that the influx should be stopped. Says Navalkar, "We have been asking for a cut-off year and if the government does not come to some decision on this we will then have to take our



One of the many hoardings which have come up in Bombay: whose city?

own steps to check the flow of people into the city. We don't mind if the cut-off date is in the future, but there has to be some cut-off date. The Shiv Sena has taken this as a crusade." He went on, "And whenever we get an opportunity, whether in the Assembly or outside, we mention influx. If this is not done at the government level then we have our own methods." "We will use every means to discourage settlement in Bombay. For instance, when people come for licences, admissions to

municipal schools and hospitals or for anything else we can deny it to them if they are newcomers and see that they do not live here. We will introduce a permit system for those who want any work done from the corporation. With power in our hands we will make it difficult for people to settle after the deadline." Navalkar claims that the Shiv Sena's talk of influx is already paying dividends and the number of people coming into the city is dwindling.

Olga Tella, Bombay



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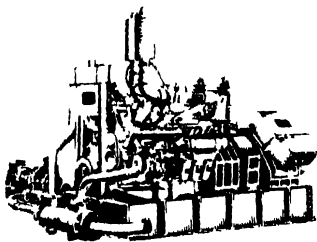


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VARIETY/KHAAS BAAT

Is it all over between Dharmendra and Anita Raaj? Anita retorts: "How can something which never existed, end? Dharamji and I share a very 'beautiful' relationship, one that can't be qualified: I have the greatest regard and respect for him. By agreeing to work with me in *Nauker Biwi Ka*, he gave my career a new lease of life. How can I forget such a gesture?" Insiders, however, insist that Anita is 'going strong' with *Sunil Hingorani*, a young director of one of her films. While some say that the couple fell in love with each other during the making of a film, others talk about their 'secret' marriage in Nasik, where they had been shooting for the film. Anita dismisses such gossip as "sheer nonsense" and claims that she

knows who is trying to spread "these nasty rumours" about her.

Lady Luck seems to be smiling on Dharmendra and his family. Sunny Deol, who was going through a lean patch, was the first to be rehabilitated when he was approached by Rahul Rawail for *Arjun*. Rahul had also given Sunny his first taste of success in *Betaab*. The film turned out to be a money-spinner and Sunny was back with a bang. Dharmendra too is not far behind. *Sitamgar*, produced by one of his cousins, did good business and now, he is receiving offers from the big banners and getting his price—just like the good old days. *Hema Malini*, Dharmendra's second wife, it seems, is still very



Dharmendra with Anita Raaj: 'beautiful' relationship



Moon Moon Sen: goodbye Bombay?

popular with the film-goers. Despite the invasion of young girls "she still gets the best response at the box-office," says a veteran distributor. "Her box-office value even today, is almost as good as Amitabh's," he adds. *Ramkali*, in which Hema plays a double role, has become an instant hit. While Hema reigns supreme on the silver screen, there is excitement at home too: Hema is soon to become a mother.

And finally, *Shashi Kapoor* has done what he promised to do: he has signed up good friend Yash Chopra to direct his next film. It is scheduled to go on the floors after Yash has released *Faasle*, which will be sometime in August. Meanwhile, Shashi has already struck a tentative agreement with *Dilip Kumar* who will lead the cast.

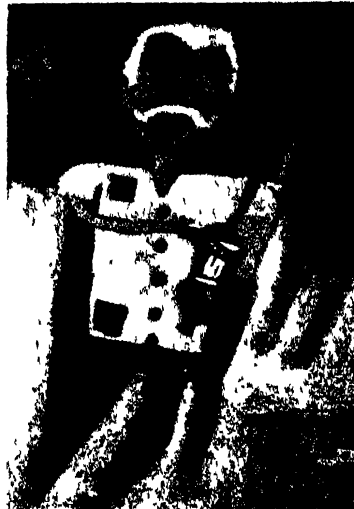
Moon Moon Sen is passing through a crucial period. *Andar Bahar* did not succeed in bringing the filmmakers to her doorstep and now she does not have any film on hand, except *Surkhiyan* and *Musafir* which are awaiting release. These two films will finally decide her future. But, since she is supposed to "have done very well" in both the films perhaps Moon Moon's stint in Hindi films is not yet over.

Amjad Khan is confused. He still cannot figure out why both his films, *Chor Police* and *Ameer Aadmi*, *Ghareeb Aadmi*, fared so miserably at the box-office. "I respect the people's verdict for what it is," he says. Amjad now plans to sign up Amitabh Bachchan and Jayaprada for his next film.

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"The (Bomb) Blasts Were the Beginning of Our Revolution"

Ram Raja Prasad Singh, leader of the Nepal Janvadi Morcha which has claimed responsibility for the recent bomb blasts in Nepal, told SUNDAY

Q Why did you carry out the bomb blasts in Nepal?

A We are a political party dedicated to the overthrow of the monarchy in Nepal. This has been going on not for a few years, but for over two decades. The first time I came out with an anti monarchist statement was in 1962. That was probably the first time anyone in Nepal had publicly propagated abolition of monarchy. I had also brought out a pamphlet at that time (demanding the overthrow of the monarchy) and met many leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders. In 1962 King Mahendra had abolished the parliamentary system, arrested the Prime Minister, most of his cabinet colleagues and Members of Parliament. The Constitution itself was abrogated. At this time the Nepali Congress began a revolution. But the aims and objectives of the Nepali Congress' revolution were limited: it wanted Parliament to be restored with the king as the constitutional head. We advocated that that was not enough. People's rights should also be restored.

In the history of Nepal the monarchy has never had any important role to play. Only during the first half of the 18th century did the king have absolute powers. After that the Ranas ruled, but in 1950 the king was restored after the overthrow of the Ranas. Our point was that the king was the villain of the piece. He had no power before that. The people had carried out a revolution in 1950 and the Rana oligarchy was overthrown but the king became the constitutional head. For the next ten years the king tried all sorts of things, experimenting with various governments rather than going towards a stable political system. He tried to malign the political parties. Finally, when a Parliament was constituted

through popular vote, the king carried out a coup just to amass power in his hands. So the king should go. I had advocated a republic but since at that time there was a crackdown on political leaders, they had all fled to India. In fact, at that time at Patna



Ram Raja Prasad Singh

there was an AICC session on and I had the opportunity of meeting a number of leaders including Nehru. But at that time I was all alone, the Nepali Congress was not prepared to modify their ways because they believed in constitutional monarchy whereas we believe in evolution of the monarchy and power to the people and the government.

Q Don't you believe that the monarchy should be abolished altogether?

A The monarchy should definitely be abolished and it has no part to play in our national life because we have learnt from experience through all these years that though we have been struggling for democracy we have not been getting it because of the king. In 1950 he sided with us because in a way he was a captive of the Rana oligarchy and he tried to come out of that and for the time being he cooperated with us. For some time he tried to go with the people and then he showed his real self. And he asserted himself and tried to regain all those absolute autocratic powers. Since then the entire struggle has been whether to contend with the king by force or just to have a relation with him where you assured him that his throne would be safeguarded in a democracy. I myself don't believe in all this. Because to tame a lion is more difficult than to kill him. My point of view is what is the use, what shall we gain by constitutionalising monarchy? Why not just overthrow it? Monarchy is a very recent institution (in Nepal) and it has no historical legitimacy.

In 1962 I was not in a position to form a political party alone with revolutionary parties. For that a national credibility has to be built. We were not with any party—the Nepali Congress or Communists. We were an independent force in the

CONVERSATION

ideological war—finding ourselves. Many people sympathised with us. They wanted to come openly with us. But then the pull of the Congress and the Communists was very strong at that time. So we had to lead our own way and for that the first thing was to get national recognition and credibility.

Every revolution starts with a constitutional struggle. For that I had to go underground for some time. Then I was a law graduate. So I made up my mind and went to Supreme Court to enlist myself as a lawyer, thinking that the government would arrest me and send me to jail. But the government let me go. I wasn't arrested. It was 1965 and I started practising. And for a year or so I practised in Supreme Court. In the 1967 election—it was the graduates consti-

In the history of Nepal, the monarchy has never had any important role to play. Only during the first half of the 18th century, did the king have absolute powers. After that, the Ranas ruled, but in 1950, the king was restored after the overthrow of the Ranas. Our point was that the king was the villain of the piece. He had no powers before

tuency election—which used to be a very prestigious election as graduates of an entire nation used to vote. The constituency was very broad, the whole nation was a constituency. And graduates residing outside Nepal also had the opportunity to vote because in each country, in the embassies there were polling booths. I contested the election with an election manifesto. The title deed was "Why are you electing?" The manifesto was an instant success. People were choosing it. And with that I had advocated remaining within the bounds of the court and law, fundamental rights will be referred and there were references against the monarchy, against the panchayat system and all that. But the government was very quick to arrest me, post-

pone the election, put me on trial and convict me.

Q: That was your first arrest.

A: Yes, there were many constitutional courts and I was advocating that I was strictly within the laws of the Constitution, it is the government which is violating it because many laws were passed by the Legislature, many ordinances were promulgated by the king just to cope with my election problem. Anyway, I came out after that and I had another spell of one year in Supreme Court. Then again the election came of the same graduate constituency of 1971 after four years. At that time I was more forthright and more vocal against the monarchy and I said now "I break your laws, I am not within bounds of the court because you yourself do not respect the court." At that time I had to conduct my election clandestinely. I had only surfaced in Kathmandu polling booths, because there were a lot of people there (more than 50,000) and they hoped some big drama would be enacted and I would again disappear after casting my vote. There was a massive manhunt for me at Kathmandu because the election result was declared after 40 days during which I was underground with more than a dozen people all unknown to me. Then my election officer declared the day of my taking oath. And I would reach the Legislature but the Rastriya Panchayat (Parliament House) was cordoned off. They wanted to arrest me outside but somehow I would reach inside. Finally, I was arrested inside. I had the briefest tenure of five minutes as a member of the Legislature.

Q: Did you take the oath?

A: No, on the first day they did not administer oath to me, the speaker refused, said that 'a constitutional crisis has come with your election and I refuse to administer oath to you.' But then there was chain reaction both inside and outside the country. I am very grateful to the Indian media, the newspapers and journalists as they spoke very fervently for me. My case was discussed in the British House of Commons also. So King Mahendra was very perturbed—he tried to placate me, brought me from the jail to his house to come to some sort of understanding and I told him in very plain words that you want to buy me and I am not going to sell myself. Our two midnight meetings ended on that note.

But he was under pressure and I would not be expelled from the House unless I had taken my oath. So he asked Rastriya Panchayat that the oath should be administered to

me, then I was brought there, the oath was administered. I wanted to make a maiden speech and the House was adjourned. I came out, made some speeches and then I was put behind bars. That was in 1971.

Q: It was the same day on which the House was adjourned?

A: No, the arrest was made after some time. Because I had a chance to address a few meetings and then they arrested me under the NSA and the Preventive Security Act.

Q: In 1976, just after your release you came to India and spent some time here.

A: No I was all the time in Nepal.

Q: This is from press reports.

A: Between 1976 and 1980 I was underground in Nepal. There was a referendum in Nepal, and at that time our party's name was Jaiwadi

In Nepal, the economy is in the hands of a chosen few. As a lawyer, I saw that when we went for company registration, if the working capital was more than a lakh, it was invariably backed by a member of the royal entourage, royal family, cabinet member and so on. So we wanted to show our resentment against these activities of the royal family

Morcha and we held at least 100 nationwide meetings.

Q: You were underground?

A: Yes during the referendum campaign I was very vocal. I used to ask openly in my public meetings—do you want to seal the fate of the entire nation, by going into a secret place and putting a ballot in a ballot box? Is it so easy to steer the nation's destiny? You have to come out to save the nation with a sword, a blood-stained sword. And only that can save the destiny of the nation, not by voting in secret for a particular system. They arrested me during the referendum campaign and again there was the old court pattern. Thrice I won it. There was habeas corpus writ. Thrice they ordered my release. They used to release me and

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then rearrest me. But finally they released me and wanted me to negotiate with the king. The Kathmandu zonal commissioner said that it was not because of the court order that you were released but because we want you to realise the political reality of the country and make up with the king. I refused to meet the king and went underground in 1980 but did not come to India. Some papers said I had come to India but all the time we were organising ourselves in Nepal.

Q: Can you tell me how you were organising yourselves?

A: We met people and got their ideas, kept them with us and told them of the hazards of revolution and the risks they would have to face. When we found that the person was still willing to be with us we kept them. The problem was how long could we keep them? We had no arms, ammunition or proper training facilities; whatever we developed was from our own experiences.

Q: Who was giving the training?

A: The truth is there was not much training in the sense there was nothing to train. Only political training and some physical exercises.

Q: What about the command training?

A: We had no arms. Purchasing

arms at an exorbitant price was beyond our reach. Then how to fight? About one thing I was very clear: Fighting with borrowed arms or some armed help would not do so we would arrange some money and arms which were being smuggled in and we are dependent on the smuggler. But if he is not able to supply arms for some time depending on the source we would have to develop something so that we could be self-sufficient.

The first thing that came to our mind was industrial gelatin. It is available in large quantities in Nepal, people fish with gelatin — you blast the gelatin in a river and a lot of fish comes. We started putting our cadets in some development projects. They were given gelatin to blast and they would keep half and blast half. But the contractors and officers did not realise it. This is how we started collecting gelatin for four years.

The real problem was with the cadets themselves. For some time they were at a high pitch of enthusiasm. And after that they were finding it impossible to be with us. Some deserted, others showed signs of weakness. On that front we had a lot of organisational experience. But one thing was fortunate that there was no dearth of people coming.

Then, how to use the gelatin?

There was danger in taking the gelatin, putting on a detonator, safety fuse and all. It was getting really difficult. Then we thought of some time devices. But then that was very complicated. We started experimenting with ordinary watches and we got the result and all the blasts were detonated with ordinary watches not with time bombs.

Q: Suppose you got help from certain countries, which were sympathetic towards your cause?

A: The thing was that we are not so developed that any country would like to cooperate and support us.

Q: But I believe one country at least, the Soviet Union is sympathetic towards you.

A: May be, but the Soviet Union is a superpower and we were in the hideouts so neither were we in a position to contact them nor they us. When the blasts came off, until we took the responsibility, nobody was willing to blame us, because we wanted to be away from public life for some time and keep to ourselves.

Q: So you had to take the responsibility openly.

A: No, nor exactly that, it would've come out, as many people had been arrested. They would have ultimately found out that we had done it. But then the political party must say that



Troops patrolling the streets of Kathmandu after the bomb blasts

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they have done it.

Q: Have you all made any efforts to contact any country for assistance?

A: I could not or rather I believe that a revolution cannot be based and successfully fought with the help of any (other) country. It is only internal, only party politics.

I remember long ago in 1962, Che Guevara, when he was in his university days was involved in the revolution in Cuba and we were very enthusiastic about him and many of his emissaries came to New Delhi also. He was enlisting international guerrillas and I was very frantic to join it. I would have gone there with him. The point is in a revolution outside help is politics—the real thing you have to act yourself. Unless you are yourself strong enough nobody will help you.

Q: But Che had the backing of the Soviet Union.

A: I don't accept that ... what he said was in revolution outside help is politics, real thing you have to do yourself. Because say you are just a band of a few hundred people what—do these few hundred people matter to Soviet Union or for that matter to the United States or China or India? Suppose any country, Soviet Union, the United States, India or China had given us a lot of arms and ammunitions what would we have done with that? Because to use them what we need are cadets and that had to be built up by ourselves. I never expected that these

Q: To come back to the question I had asked earlier, what did you hope to achieve by these blasts?

A: The 20 June bomb blast was our first attempt they were the beginning of our revolution.

Q: That was hardly a beginning. These isolated bomb blasts didn't achieve very much.

A: Yes ... but it is a beginning. It has started the revolution. We couldn't have attacked small police stations or a small army post. That would've been done. But we thought we must symbolically come on the national scene and by choosing the targets we made our intentions clear. We are anti-monarchists so we attacked the royal palace from two sides, the western and the southern. We are anti-panchayat, we attacked the panchayat and secretariat. We don't conform that the people at the royal palace, royal family, enjoying the privy purse and indulging in money-making. I am told the late king amassed a lot of money and so did his sons and brothers.

In Nepal, the economy is in the hands of a chosen few. As a lawyer, I saw that when we went for company

registration if the working capital was more than a lakh it was invariably backed by a member of the royal entourage, family or cabinet member or officers and so on. So we wanted to show our resentment against these activities of the royal family and attacked the Palace Star Hotel.

Q: The bomb blasts were basically a symbolic protest.

A: We had planned to attack 15 or 50 places on 20 June, in Kathmandu, army posts in Birgunge. There was a big army barrack we wanted to blast. So the bomb was put there. But the Kathmandu blast took off earlier. So this one was detected before others could blast.

Q: How was the entire thing planned?

A: We were brooding over it for years. So we divided sectors and chose the cadets first. We sent them

To tame a lion is more difficult than to kill him. What is the use? What shall we gain by constitutionalising monarchy? Why not just overthrow it? Monarchy is a very recent institution (in Nepal) and it has no historical legitimacy.

at the places which had been chosen and we put them at the targets. So on 20 June, 15 places were covered. But then the Satyagraha of the Nepali Congress, the agitation of the students, teachers, and the commies intervened. The police got unnecessarily alert. So, many places we wanted to attack had to be left out.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: This is the first step. But now we have come to the hard realities—through the revolution we have to terrorise the government. We will later try to win over some areas and concentrate there. Then try to enlarge the area and step into the enemy area, that is the king's area. Again making the republic that way—going through the real fighting. From symbolism to reality.

Q: Why are all the parties in Nepal condemning you today?

A: That is very natural. The Nepali Congress, as I told you, believes in constitutional monarchy and when there is an attack on monarchy itself, naturally with their convictions they will be with the king. I don't have anything to say against them. As regards the commie parties, in Nepal it's a queer thing all the parties from the very beginning they have always put in their policy statements that they believe in constitutional monarchy. It is much against the spirit of communism. But then this is how communism functions in Nepal.

Q: Do you deny absolutely that you've been staying in India?

A: Yes. I deny (it).

Q: But intelligence sources have been saying that you have been spending a lot of time in Patna.

A: I think for that matter I studied in India. I was a student for years in India and I have many friends and relatives there. But for political purposes I always try to avoid India, because it is very easy to give a dog a bad name and kill it. So all the revolutions that took place in Nepal, ended inconclusively. B.P. Koirala, Gen Swanson, they all called for revolution and had India as their base when they started their revolution. The first one ended in a compromise and the other two in the effort of a compromise. I don't want to end up similarly.

Suppose in India a safe sanctuary is given to us, all these hazards will not have to be borne and our cadets would like to do something. Now they have to hide to survive, but in our hideouts. So this is the experience we have. Possibly these cadets would not have been so disciplined. Previously our experience was that they could not hide a grenade in Kathmandu but our boys now could hide a fleet of explosives. That means it is the severity of the trial, the severity of the make-up of our mind that we had to be have in Nepal and not fly away to safety. And you know the hit-and-run method—we hit and came back to our hideouts. Our place is in our hideouts not in the safe sanctuary of another country.

So I found that psyche previously was (especially among cadets of other parties with whom I was in prison) do something and run to India. Ours was that there is nothing called safe sanctuary. Our guerrillas were taught the essence of secrecy. Every guerrilla has his secrecy, that is the essence of what I've taught—the essence of success is secrecy.

Interviewed by Saumitra Banerjee

Poisoned Waters

Dangerous industrial effluents from tanneries have caused a serious drinking water problem in Ambur, in the North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu

The queue for drinking water was 13 days old. The women had dribbled in over the last several days to stake their claim with rusty tins and broken pots for water that never seemed to come. There is only one source of potable water in the entire village of Solur near Ambur in North Arcot district, Tamil Nadu and that is a pipe that brings borewell water from Periakuppam village, five kms away. The irony of the situation is that there is absolutely no paucity of water in Solur. All the 72 wells in the village are full—but with gut-wrenchingly contaminated water. The highly polluted well water is acidic and nauseatingly more salty than sea water. The pollution has been caused by tannery effluents.

In Tamil Nadu it is common to see women trudging eight kms to fetch drinking water. A large number of villages in the state have no drinking water source. In the Ambur belt there is plenty of water. Unfortunately, indiscriminate discharge of effluents from the tanneries in this area has caused devastating pollution in the last ten years. There are a few deep wells here and there which have not yet been contaminated. The womenfolk of Solur walk two kms to Kuruvithope to fetch water as the borewell water supply has dried up. Said Pavanamma, "Our head aches carrying water like this. Daily we spend about three to four hours just fetching water. As the vessels turn black if washed in the briny water of the wells, we have to wash our vessels and clothes with the clean pump water from Kuruvithope. Vomiting and diarrhoea (symptoms of gastroenteritis) are so common here. We all suffer from it. So many times we have represented to the authorities. But no one bothers. The rich tanners keep the authorities happy. Nothing is ever done to improve our position." The farmers in this area are having a bad time because the briny water has made the land barren. Said P. Jayaraman, "I used to grow paddy and sugarcane in my one-and-a-half acres. But for the last four years nothing has grown in my land." Said Janaki Amma acidly, "Now only thorns will grow."

The leather industry in India is essentially concentrated in Calcutta,

Kanpur, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Of the Rs 586 crores earned by way of leather export, Tamil Nadu accounts for 60 per cent. In Tamil Nadu, the nerve centre of the leather industry is Ambur and the surrounding areas which include Vaniyambadi, Ranipet, Pernambet and Gudiyattam.

Of the 500 registered tanners, 350 are in the Ambur zone with all the giants being located in this area—T. Abdul Wahid, (TAW) South East Tanning Co, Akber Leathers, Parvez Ayaz, Eastern Chrome Tanning Co, Asia, Florine Shoes and the state owned Tansi. The main reason why tanning has been concentrated in the

Ambur area is because of its abundance of water due to the Palar river basin. In addition to this, the Palar water has a low content of chlorine, making it ideally suitable for tanning. Earlier only the East India (EI) Tanning Process (using vegetable extract) was used. Ambur was the ideal place because it nestled at the bottom of the Javadi Hills which was rich in bubble and wattle, ingredients required for tanning. Cheap labour and good climate were the other factors that saw to the rise of the tanneries in this area. In Ambur there are 75 tanneries and in Vaniyambadi there are 65 tanneries. In the early Seventies chrome tan-

The queue for unpolluted water lengthens



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ning was introduced in a big way as it was much quicker than El tanning. Many countries abroad banned primary tanning due to the environmental hazard it posed. India, Korea and a few other Third World countries were the places where the "dirty work" was carried out. These foreign countries imported the finished leather processed in India. The chrome tanning process requires 276 chemicals, including 14 heavy metals like chromium, zinc, cadmium and arsenic. Different types of dyes are also required. For every kilogram of leather processed, 35 litres of water at a conservative estimate, is required. The daily production of leather in Ambur is 250 tonnes. In other words, 7.75 million litres of waste water containing toxic chemicals like ammonium chloride, sulphate, salt and chromium are let out as effluents daily.

To quote a confidential report published by the Soil Survey and Land Use Organisation (SSLUO), Vellore: 'Though all tanneries are required

to treat the effluents and let out only the treated wastes, this practice is seldom followed in North Arcot district. Most of the lagoons are of earthen construction, and only a few are built of concrete. The effluents are let out into the lagoons and allowed to dry by the solar evaporation system. The number and capacity of the lagoons are not commensurate with the quantity of effluents in most of the cases. Hence it is a common sight to see overflowing lagoons and the water getting drained into the nearby fields. There are also largescale breaches in the lagoons and the effluents seep and flow to stagnate later in the fields. Quite a large number of tanneries in Pernambut, Valathur, Vanivambadi, Ranipet, Walajah, Arcot and Guduvattam zones discharge their effluents directly into lakes and tanks which in turn contaminate the water in the surrounding wells.

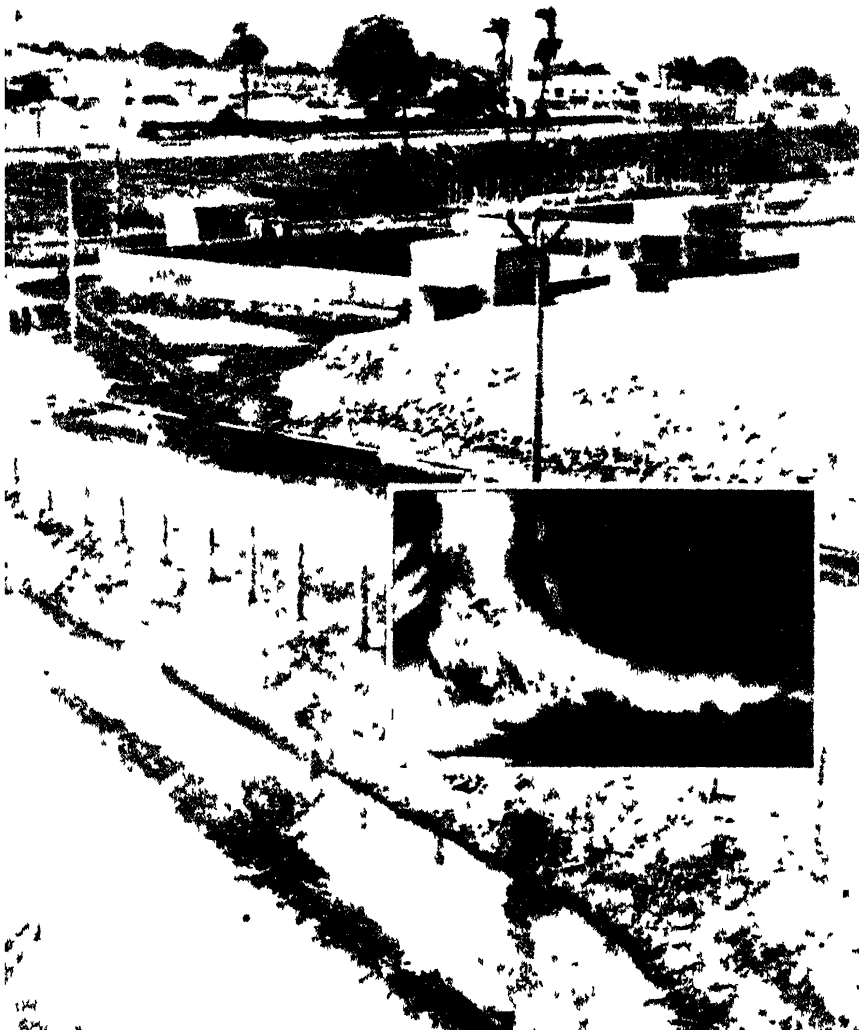
A few tanneries in Pernambut, Vanivambadi and Vellore let the effluents directly into Palar river

contaminating the potable water also. Apart from this, the wastes like used lime, hair, leather bits etc. heaped both inside and outside tanneries get slowly washed by the rain water, thus contaminating the adjacent areas. As the Palar river is dry, the effluents seep in, contaminating the underwater table, which is the source of drinking water for all the wells nearby. Thus, water for drinking and irrigation gets polluted. In Ambur, 200 villages and in Ranipet, 50 villages have been badly affected by the polluted water. The SSLUO report says: 'Because of the gradual deterioration in the quality of irrigation water and development of salinity hazards, crops have been affected, resulting in very low yields. The crops that generally grow in the Palar river basin area are paddy, sugarcane, ragi, cholam, groundnut, vegetable and coconut. According to a graph published by the training and visits unit of the department of agriculture, the production of paddy in the area has dropped from six lakh tonnes in 1978 to two lakh tonnes in 1982.

Touring the area, this correspondent found that several patches of the Palar basin had become dry and hard due to continuous dumping of effluents in the river. There were an endless number of lagoons which contained effluents that looked like primordial slime—a thick, viscous brown ooze with an overpowering smell of chemicals, particularly ammonia. There was one lagoon by the side of the national highway 46 into which the effluents of a tanning company, Srinivas and Co. were let out.

Perched precariously close to the stinking ooze was a small building that served as a centre for the nutritious midday meal scheme. It is incredible that the authorities could be so lacking in sense to locate a meal centre next to a poisonous bed of effluents. The purity of water is determined by the pH factor (hydrogen ion concentration). Pure water has a pH value of seven. Less would indicate that the water is acidic and more would mean it is alkaline. Water with a pH value ranging from 6.5 to 8 is acceptable. In the Ambur zone, analysis has shown that the water is highly acidic. Likewise, the electrical conductivity (EC) of water is supposed to be zero. Water with EC up to a value of one is deemed potable. If the water has a reading of three and above, it is unfit for human consumption and irrigation. The more saline the water, the higher the EC reading. According to SSLUO, the EC of water in Pernambut is ten

Effluent streams from a tannery and (inset) contact dermatitis on a tannery worker's foot



Somalpuram, Tharvozhi, Govindapuram in Ambur, Udayendram and Thuthipet in Vaniyambadi are some of the villages that have water with an Ec value over five. The chromium content in water is supposed to be 0.05 mg per litre. In Ambur it is over a hundred times the prescribed limit. Likewise, the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) is extremely high, making it impossible for organisms to survive. As the chloride content in the Palar river increased, the tanners had to use more chemicals to neutralise it. The result was that the effluents contained more toxic chemicals, increasing damage to the adjoining areas.

The high salt content in the effluents made the water and land very saline, and the land fallow. Unable to cultivate, thousands of small farmers in the Ambur zone sold their land to the tanners who needed land as they were expanding at a rapid rate due to the incentives and subsidies given by the governments. The landless farmers invariably took up employment in the tanneries. As there was no scope for employment elsewhere the villagers suffered their fate silently. If they revolted against contamination they would be thrown out of their jobs. In fact at Vaniyambadi, fear has been so successfully drilled into the minds of the villagers that they objected to the photographer taking pictures of the effluents that flow alongside the drinking water supply. T.P. Rathnam, a school-teacher of Solur filed a case more than ten years ago demanding compensation as his land was getting polluted due to the effluents from the tanneries. He told SUNDAY that till now the case had not come up for trial. But in the meantime, he was transferred, beaten up and harassed several times.

The heavy concentration of tanneries in the Ambur zone is a serious health hazard. In a large number of tanneries, the workers are not given adequate protection. Of the 22,000 workers in the tanneries, many have contracted dermatitis from direct contact with chemicals. This correspondent found that workers were working without boots or gloves in a number of tanneries. Local doctors in Ambur and Vaniyambadi told SUNDAY that a large number of tannery workers had terrible skin problems and ulcers. They are all chronic patients. The minute the sores and ulcers heal after medication, the workers get back to the tannery where the problem erupts again. Investigations by SUNDAY revealed that

the ESI hospital in Ambur had no registered case of skin infections in 1979. In 1984 this hospital alone treated 1,510 cases. Due to the polluted water gastro-enteritis is extremely common. While the ESI hospital in Ambur treated 107 cases of diarrhoea and enteric problems in 1979, in 1984 the figure had shot up to 765. Almost all the doctors in the Ambur zone complained that gastro-enteritis had reached the proportions of a chronic epidemic. Amoebiasis and giardiasis/dysentery as also worms are common problems because of the contaminated water. Lower respiratory tract infections are very common in children. This leads to primary complex and TB. In fact a number of workers also suffer from TB. There is also a high incidence of azoospermia (low sperm count) in tannery workers. During the period January to June 1985, a test on 600 tannery workers revealed that all 600 had a sperm count of zero. In the month of June, 29 persons died of cholera in and around Ambur. The authorities choose to give specious reasons for the deaths but it is common knowledge that the cholera bacteria breeds in saline water. The contaminated water in this belt therefore makes it extremely vulnerable to frequent outbreaks of cholera. Very often the authorities dismiss it as dysentery. Another rare syndrome found is "milk diarrhoeas." It has been found that infants are victims of diarrhoea because the mother's milk is contaminated. Women working in the tanneries get dermatitis while the women engaged in sorting wool are chronic victims of fever, skin irritations and respiratory problems.

Children carrying drinking water



Raw hides and skins go through different processes before they emerge as finished leather goods. The processes include soaking, liming, deliming, bating, degreasing, pickling, depickling, chrome or semi-chrome tanning, dyeing, fatliquoring, etc.

Vegetable tannings have very high BOD and COD that affect aquatic life. Chromium salts are very toxic to fish and aquatic life. Hexavalent chromium causes perforation of nasal septum of workers and nearby residents, produces wheezing, pain, fever, loss of weight, irritation and corrosion of skin. Long-term exposure to chromium causes lung cancer, eyelid ulcerations, conjunctivitis and asthma. Formaldehyde, which is used in the finishing stages, causes eye irritations, breathing problems and gastro-enteritis.

Tannery effluents can be treated biologically or chemically. The former is a method by which organisms are injected into the effluents which literally eat away the harmful components. In the chemical process, chemicals are introduced to neutralise the effluents. This is a very expensive method and most tanners in the Ambur zone use the biological process. But the pits where the biological process is supposed to take place are grossly inadequate and most tanners tend to let out the untreated wastes into the Palar river or adjoining areas. The Tamil Nadu Leather Development Corporation and the Vaniyambadi Tannery Association have together floated a joint stock company that will set up a common effluent treatment plant in Vaniyambadi at a cost of Rs two crores. In Vaniyambadi, the Cutchery road alone has 65 tanneries. P. Khaleelur Rahman, the president of the Vaniyambadi Small Tanners' Association told SUNDAY that, of the Rs 50 lakhs that was to be the tanners' contribution, he had managed to drum up only Rs nine lakhs so far, and that too with great difficulty. The project has already run into severe financial problems even before it could get going. In Ambur, the ten big tanners have decided to instal their own effluent treatment plants. The rest of the 65 small and medium tanners have got together to form the Ambur Tannery Effluent Treatment Service Industrial Cooperative Society Ltd in November 1984. As a treatment plant requires ten to 15 acres, the 65 tanners have decided to construct four common plants in four zones in Ambur.

The society has sought the assistance of Richardson and Cruddas, a government of India undertaking, who have suggested a biological

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treatment plant for the 65 tanners. Effluents from the tanneries will be brought by pipes to the common sumps where they will be treated biologically. The project costs Rs 4.5 crores. K. Balasundaram, secretary of the society, told SUNDAY that raising money for the project was posing a serious problem and that they were approaching state and central government agencies to fund the project.

The TN Pollution Control Board has fixed a deadline for the tanners to install an effluent treatment plant in their tanneries if their licences are to be renewed. The deadline has been extended 14 times, with the last one having expired on 31 July 1985. The latest word is that a decision will be taken after M.G. Ramachandran returns from Japan. The tanners, however, raise a pertinent point. As P.K. Rahman said, "The government insists that we instal these effluent treatment plants. But they are not in a position to give us the technology. From where are we to get it? Let them tell us what's to be done and we will do it."

He pointed out that there was a bumper coconut crop this year. While conceding that there was contamination of drinking water, Yusuf blamed the municipal authorities for failing to locate the water source for Ambur in the right place. Ambur is being supplied water from Pacchakuppam which is downstream. In other words, the water which has already been polluted by the effluents, is being used for the water supply. Moreover, as Ambur was downstream of Vaniyambadi, the effluents from the latter flowed to Ambur. The Vaniyambadi water was good because the authorities had used a water source that was upstream of the town. The tanners tried to help the villagers by giving Rs two lakhs for laying new pipes to bring potable water from nearby sources to the affected villages. Lorries belonging to the tanners were also loaned to supply drinking water to the villages, said Yusuf.

While the villagers bemoan their fate, few of them will openly criticise the tanners. On the one hand they are indebted to them because the menfolk work in the tanneries. On the other hand they are drawing water from wells and the sumps belonging to the tanners. So naturally, they do not wish to alienate the tanners. The tanners are sitting pretty because of their twin advantages, money power and political clout. The tanners have close ties with the AIADMK and the Congress(I). The TAW's matriculation

school was opened recently by the vice president R. Venkataraman. The former AIADMK MLA, Kulasekhara Pandian, whom the locals elected thinking he would do something regarding the effluents problem, has now become the chairman of the Tamil Nadu Leather Development Corporation. The state government officials are given swank treatment in the plush guest houses of the big tanners. The present Congress(I) MLA from Vaniyambadi, H. Abdul Majid is himself a tanner. In other words, the tanners are a strong lobby with tremendous political clout. It is interesting to note that the pollution control board gives an extension of only two to three months at a time for the installation of an effluent treatment plant when it takes at least one year to commission a plant.

The only group in Ambur that seems genuinely concerned about the pollution caused by the tannery effluents is the community action group (CAD) headed by Narayana

sults on two fronts.

The Ambur pollution problem highlights the urgent need for research in effluent treatment technology. Extensions of deadlines by the pollution control board are meaningless unless the tanners are first provided with the technology for the disposal of effluents. After research has yielded suitable technology, a monitoring committee would have to be set up to ensure that the tanners arouse the effluent treatment process. The ultimate efforts should be to reclaim the contaminated land. As per the SSLUO survey of 1982 tannery effluents have "severely affected" 3,911.19 hectares in and around Ambur. In addition to this 11,850.99 hectares has been "moderately" affected. And unless something is done quickly, the situation will worsen because production is only going to increase. The seventh five year plan envisages the export of leather goods to shoot up to Rs 1,050 crores, that is a doubling of the current figure. In other words, while



Women sorting out wool on Cutchery Road: a pollution source

Murthi, or Nani, as he is popularly called. The CAD, an independent organisation which was started in 1978, has been in the forefront trying to create awareness among the villagers regarding the pollution threat that they face. Last year on 5 June (environment protection day) the CAD organised a highly successful demonstration where the women broke pots full of contaminated water from their wells before the municipal authorities. Nani, who has been doing research into the extent of contamination in the Ambur zone, told SUNDAY that he was driven to this field because his own father, who was a farmer, had found that his lands which were hitherto fertile, were fast becoming barren. As many other farmers in the region were suffering the same fate, Nani felt that it was his duty to probe into the matter. His efforts have yielded re-

tanners achieve affluence, the villagers will be swamped by the effluents—unless the authorities take prompt action. While nothing can be done to reclaim the severely affected areas, efforts should be made to do so immediately.

The SSLUO, in conclusion, suggests that new tanneries should be confined to existing tannery complexes and industrial estates instead of spreading to new areas. Moreover, new tanneries should be located away from productive lands. In already affected areas, raising crops like paddy and sugarcane should be avoided and only rainfed crops should be grown. All this is very well but as Kannamma of Sanankuppam village told SUNDAY bitterly, "The authorities will take notice of our plight only if we all die like in Bhopal."

Anita Pratap, Madras

Prime Ministerial Government

It has been said that the cabinet form of government has yielded place to what is described as "prime ministerial government" or the "Prime Minister's cabinet" with other ministers acting as his, "agents" or "assistants." This situation has been created in politics chiefly by the working of the party system and the Prime Ministers' control and skillful management of their parties and through patronage. The powers of the state and the efficiency of the civil service has continuously grown, while competence shows a fair amount of decline. Consequently, the power of the cabinet has declined progressively and the power of the Prime Minister has increased proportionately.

To understand the magnitude and nature of the changes, it would be helpful to review the evolution of the "cabinet," the concept of which goes back to the Privy Councils of European kings. The members of those groups served as advisers to the monarch and, in certain cases, as supervisors of particular governmental functions. The growth of the parliamentary system produced the particular type of cabinet government prevalent today in, *inter alia*, countries of western Europe, Canada, Japan, India and others. In these set-ups, ministers are almost always members of the majority party or coalition of parties in the legislative body and the ministers have themselves won seats in the Parliament. The leader of the majority party in Parliament serves as the Prime Minister or head of the government, and he chooses the other cabinet members, each of whom then runs a department. Under the parliamentary system, citizens do not vote directly for the chief executive. Instead, executive power is a creation of the legislative branch, and the cabinet can be ousted by a parliamentary vote of no confidence.

Bagehot in his memorable words described the cabinet as a "committee—a hyphen which joins, a buckle which fastens the legislative part of the state to the executive part of the state. In its origin it belongs to the one, in its function it belongs to the other." He further said, "It is a creature but it has the power of destroying its creators. It is an execu-

tive which can annihilate the legislature as well as an executive which is the nominee of the legislature. It was made out; it can unmake, it was derivative in its origin, but it is destructive in the action."

The Prime Minister has the right to select his own cabinet members and dismiss them at will and he holds the power to decide the cabinet's agenda and announce the decisions reached without taking a vote. Prof. Harold Laski, elucidating the point further, says that the Prime Minister need not consult his cabinet on any matter and cites the instances of Baldwin who, without consulting his colleagues in 1935, decided to dissolve

The Prime Minister is the head of the cabinet or the council of ministers. Being the leader of the party in power, he is the person who actually matters. Though not possessed of any formal title, he has the authority of the government.

the Parliament. In 1924 Macdonald and in 1945, Churchill also did not consult the cabinet before advising dissolution. Regarding the other powers of the Prime Minister, Richard Crossman, a prominent member of the Harold Wilson cabinet, said, "Remember that each minister can be sacked by the Prime Minister any day. We must be constantly aware that our tenure of office depends on his personal discretion... He is not a free man in that he could not sack all the undisputed incompetents in his team—without upsetting his own position. But even though he is balancing forces in the cabinet rather than ordering them, he has, in my view, tremendous power—something which any cabinet minister is aware of every day of his life. I (as a minister) am aware that I am there at the Prime Minister's discretion. The Prime Minister can

withdraw that discretion any day he likes, without stating a reason. And there is nothing I can do about it..."

(There have been cases of Indian Prime Ministers reportedly taking important decisions irrespective of the cabinet. Some of such instances are: the final round of decision on the reorganisation of the states in 1956, Nehru's request to President Kennedy seeking protection in 1962 and the declaration of internal Emergency in 1975.)

Interestingly, Richard Crossman points out that under the British cabinet system (what Mr Crossman calls 'prime ministerial government'), "the Prime Minister can define the consensus as being what he thinks fit." About collective responsibility, he says, it now means that "everybody who is in the government must accept and publicly support every cabinet decision, even if he was not present at the discussion or was completely unaware that the decision had been taken. As we have seen, collective decision-making is now fragmented, and many major decisions may be taken by two, three, four or five ministers. But the moment they have been taken, and minuted, they have the force of a decision taken by the whole cabinet, and are binding on the hundred odd members of the government."

Harold Wilson, in his book *The Government of Britain*, has explained the job of the Prime Minister of Britain as one of the most exciting and certainly one of the best organised—organised by history in the democratic world. "This is an office to cherish, stimulating and satisfying; you will never have a dull moment, you will never get bored. But it is a full time calling. There are not the easy, spacious, socially oriented days of some of the predecessors...I have had to work seven days a week, at least 12 to 14 hours a day. But the variety and interest—with at least 500 different documents or submissions, to read in an average week and after a busy week—means that you do not get bored, consequently you do not get tired." According to Wilson, the notion of overriding prime ministerial power, is predominantly academic and is wrong. It ignores the system of democratic checks and balances in Parlia-

ment, in cabinet, and not the least, in the party machine and the party in the country" Wilson further writes, "Cabinet is a democracy, not an autocracy. Each member of it, including the Prime Minister seeks to convince his colleagues as to the course to follow. The cabinet bears his stamp, it is true on each and every policy issue, but it is the cabinet, not the Prime Minister, who decides." He does not deny that the power of the Prime Minister has increased, but he says this is only because the power of government is greater, and the Prime Minister has simply shared this increased power "Inspiration comes from the country"—political inspiration today comes not from the dinner tables of the elite or from London's political fringe, but from a broad spectrum of party workers and the voters at large. Every member of the administration, regardless of which party he represents, must remember that he is in the cabinet or in Parliament not as a result of his own great qualities but "because people believe in him, and work for him, not primarily as an individual but as a standard bearer (of the party)".

The United States Constitution makes no direct reference to a cabinet, but the cabinet by the middle of this century had taken on institutional status through both custom and law. After the Second World War, for instance, the Congress enacted a Presidential Succession Act recognizing the cabinet as an official body. The law, which has since been amended, provides for cabinet members, starting with the secretary of state as the senior secretary, to be in line to succeed the President after the vice president, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President pro tempore of the Senate. More significant than that law is the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, enacted in 1967, which deals with presidential disability. Under certain extreme circumstances, the executive department heads and the vice-president may recommend to the Congress that the President is unable to carry out his duties. If the Congress agrees, the vice-president becomes the acting President till the disability lasts.

While the cabinet eventually achieved constitutional recognition, the White House staff has accumulated power without such sanction. In fact, the staff has in the recent decades become a strong rival to the cabinet (Abraham Lincoln, at the end of a cabinet session, collected the voices and found himself opposed by everyone around the table "Noes seven, ayes one", he

announced, "the ayes have it")

The constitutional position of the Indian Prime Minister is expressed through article 74 of the Constitution of India which says "There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in exercise of his functions act in accordance with such advice" (after the 44th Amendment, 1978, of the Constitution Before the Constitution 42nd Amendment, 1976, Art 74 read as under "There shall be a council of ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President in exercise of his functions. After the 42nd Amendment, 1976, it was changed to "There shall be a council of ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall in exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice.") There, however is a proviso "Provided that the President may require the council of ministers to reconsider such advice, either generally or

Since he represents the aspiration of the masses, the Prime Minister has to rise above his party. He is as much the leader of the party as of the government. His significance lies in the fact that he represents the consensus of the party, as much as the Parliament and the people.

otherwise, and the President shall act in accordance with the advice tendered after such reconsideration." The architects of the Indian Constitution made it abundantly clear that the council of ministers is more powerful and the President occupies only a ceremonial position. He is bound by the Constitution to act on the advice of the council of ministers and cannot act independently and any independent action would be tantamount to the violation of the Constitution and he will be liable to impeachment.

The view of the Supreme Court is also as categorical and explicit as that of the framers of the Constitution. In *Raisahib Ramjaway Kapoor and others Vs the State of Punjab*, SC 1955(2), the Supreme Court held the same view as in *A Sanjeevi Naidu Vs State of Madras* (AIR, 1970 SC

1102). It held in *U N Rao Vs Indira Gandhi* (AIR, 1971, SC 1002) that Art 74(1) is mandatory and, therefore, the President cannot exercise the executive power without the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. Any exercise of executive power without aid and advice will be unconstitutional in view of Art 53(1).

The Prime Minister is the head of the cabinet or the council of ministers. Being the leader of the party in power, he is the person who actually matters. Though not possessed of any formal title, he has the substance of the authority of the government. The President has no option but to summon the recognised leader of the majority party and appoint him or her as the Prime Minister and ask him or her to recommend other ministers. The President cannot disregard the majority party and call upon other parties to form a coalition government. It is only when no party has a clear or absolute majority that the President can use his discretion. But even in such a situation the President has to invite the leader of the largest single party to find out if he can form a government by including in it members of other parties.

Thus in a parliamentary democracy, the Prime Minister is the central figure who decides crucial internal and international policies, directs measures of great economic importance and is responsible and accountable to the Parliament and the nation for the performance of the administration. Of course, collective cabinet responsibility is the essence of the democratic process, but the council of ministers is virtually chosen by the President in accordance with the wishes of the Prime Minister. The broad guidance of the party in power notwithstanding, the personality of a Prime Minister has a telling effect on a democratic government.

Since he represents the aspiration of the masses, the Prime Minister has to rise above his party. He is as much the leader of the party as of the government. His significance lies in the fact that he represents the consensus of the party, as much as of the Parliament and the people. His powers arise basically and ultimately from the people whom he leads. His sensitivity and responsiveness to the swings of public opinion become the hallmark of his leadership. Through mass meetings he establishes a personal bond with the people. Some times his leadership comes to be characterised as 'charismatic' or 'populist'. People's perception and image of his leadership came to influence the party, the government and even the bureaucracy.

Shyam Sundar Tulsian, New Delhi

TRIBUTE

A Voice of Reason is Silenced

A popular leader is brutally gunned down

Assassins' bullets have snatched away the lives of two young politicians who could have played a major role in India's journey into the twenty-first century. To mourn Lalit Maken alone would be unfair. Though not in active politics for the past few years, his wife Gitanjali was a former president of the National Students' Union of India, a front organisation of the Congress. In the death of Lalit Maken, the Indian youth have lost the only activist from among their ranks who had dared to mould a successful political career on his own. He may have died a Congress(I) MP, but it cannot be ignored that before joining the Congress(I), between 1979 and 1982, Maken was outside the fold of the party led by the late Mrs Indira Gandhi. Even as a ruling party member, his voice was always the voice of reason—perhaps that is why on many occasions it was identified as a voice of dissent. Only a politician who has a mass base can afford to speak the truth. The lack of popular support generated on one's own name thwarts a politician's ability to speak out against his own party. Lalit

Maken was, by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's own admission, one of the better Congress(I) MPs. This, however, did not deter him from criticising the textile policy or exposing the doings of ministers who were not upholding the people's interests. The 1979 textile strike in Delhi had seen Maken emerge as the capital's number one trade unionist. Many unions sought his leadership. He organised a bus strike in 1983, much to the embarrassment of the party of which he was a member. Apart from the private sector employees, the government servants too had accepted his leadership in his brief five year tenure as a trade union leader.

Lalit Maken had upset many apple carts. Apart from the traditional trade union leaders of Delhi, whom he uprooted from one union after another, the old guard in Congress politics felt disturbed by his growing popularity. As he had the support of the workers, he was an opponent who could not be isolated by palace intrigues alone. Speculation has been rife since his murder: was it the act of Sikh extremists? Contemporary his

tory tells us that the terrorists in Punjab have gone after their victims alone. The victim's spouse was normally not touched.

By murdering Gitanjali Maken, the assassins ensured that the legend of Lalit Maken died on 31 July 1985. Had Gitanjali lived, there is little doubt that she would have stepped in to ensure that her husband's work survived after his death. She had become a housewife to make sure that there was no clash of interests between herself and Lalit Maken. In the days when he was out of the Congress(I), Gitanjali had continued to be an ardent supporter of Mrs Indira Gandhi and a large portrait of Mrs Gandhi adorned the drawing room of their flat. Lalit and Gitanjali Maken were a happy couple while she took the backseat to see him rise in politics; he always gave her the respect due to a person who had potential in politics. With their murder, honest political endeavour has received a setback which will not be made up for years to come.

S.B.



A garlanded Maken with his wife, celebrating his victory in the Lok Sabha polls

Courtesy Praharaj Parijat / Patriot

NEW DELHI

Lalit Maken's Brutal Murder

Violence returns to New Delhi

It came exactly nine months after the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984 Lalit Maken, the young Congress(I) MP from south Delhi, died the same gruesome death, riddled with the bullets of determined assassins. It was a sunny morning on Wednesday, 31 July and Maken had just finished meeting his followers at the Kirti Nagar residence of his parents in west Delhi. As he came out, his wife Gitanjali and a couple of friends, the killers struck. Maken shouting "Mummy, Mummy" tried to escape but the two assassins chased him right up to his drawing room and emptied their weapons (the police claim they used semi automatic guns, one of the 9 mm variety and the other, possibly, a Mauser). The three minute operation over, they sped away on a green Bajaj Super scooter (DJIL 8546)—their stolen getaway vehicle leaving behind three bloodstained bodies. While Lalit Maken was declared dead immediately on arrival at the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital, his wife Gitanjali and Balkrishna Khanna a Congress worker who had come to meet Maken to get his passport attested, were later pronounced dead in the intensive care unit (ICU). By this time, the news of the assassination had already begun to spread and hundreds of supporters of this leading trade union leader of Delhi, had collected at the hospital.

The scene outside the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital was reminiscent of the other black Wednesday, nine months ago, when hundreds of people had gathered outside the gates of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Curiously, the murderers of both Mrs Gandhi and Lalit Maken and his wife had been waiting behind

iron gates. Maken who had been elected to the Lok Sabha from the South Delhi constituency in 1984 and was on his way to becoming a firebrand parliamentarian had been allotted government accommodation only recently. The young couple had shifted to their new residence at bungalow AB 15 on Tilak Marg on 22 July. Maken was without his personal security officer (PSO) for a few days because the police guard had

The events that led to the death of Maken, his wife and Balkrishna Khanna appeared to be meticulously planned and well executed. One of the eyewitnesses, the ten year old domestic servant of the Makens, recalled the moments that shattered the morning calm on 31 July. Islam, the young servant who had been employed by the Makens at their Kirti Nagar home for more than a year had been asked by Gitanjali Maken to take some clothes and boxes to their waiting Maruti car. Lalit Maken had just completed his weekly meeting with people from his constituency. After the last visitor left and he placed the sheaf of applications he had received in a file, and was about to proceed to Parliament house, Gitanjali asked her husband to wait since Islam was placing the luggage in the car.

The two armed assassins were lurking behind the lamppost near the gate when Islam came out of the house to keep the packages inside the car. "Bera ek glass pani pila do (Give us a glass of water)" said one of them. Islam noticed that one of the men was carrying a gun and the other had a pistol in his hip pocket when he returned with two glasses of iced water in a tray. Islam thought that the men were plain clothed security guards of his Saheb. He was quite used to seeing security guards in the house in the past few months. Three minutes later, Islam rushed out after hearing what he thought were crackers bursting to see his master lying in a pool of blood and the two men, who had thanked him politely for the water a few minutes ago shooting at Maken.

Meanwhile, Gitanjali, had come out of the house and within seconds bullets riddled her body. While the gunmen were shooting at his wife, the injured Maken managed to crawl towards the sliding door of the room which had once been their drawing room and finding the door locked tried to take refuge inside the concrete niche below the staircase.



The bodies of Lalit and Gitanjali Maken their last journey

been shifted to his Tilak Marg home while he continued staying at Kirti Nagar. (Fifteen members of the Central Reserve Police Force, were guarding an empty house at the exact moment when the person they were supposed to protect was being gunned down at his Kirti Nagar residence.)

The assassins pursued him and shot him five times. The second assassin, fired eight bullets at Dhiraj, Maken's nephew who had come down the staircase to see what the noise was all about. Dhiraj miraculously, escaped unhurt. Pointing to the bullet marked wall of the house he said shakily, "Jab chacha gir bhī gaye, tab bhī unhone aur goliyan marī (Even after my uncle was wounded, they continued to shoot at him)".

The police arrived at the spot 25 minutes later but by then Maken, Gitanjali and Balkrishna Khanna had been rushed to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital. According to Rajiv Malhotra, a neighbour who carried Maken in his lap a few minutes after the tragedy, two telephone calls were made but instead of waiting for the police, they rushed Maken, his wife and Khanna to hospital. Malhotra, whose white kurta pajamas (he was

preparing tea in the kitchen when he heard the sound of gunfire) were stained with blood, said that he had carried the bleeding but inert body into the emergency ward. "The police have been extremely irresponsible in taking action in this case. If they had reached the spot immediately, at least the assailants may have been apprehended." Another major security lapse that seems to have occurred, besides the removal of the personal security officer, was pointed out by Madan Lal Khurana, leader of the opposition in the metropolitan council the following day.

While the Delhi police tracked down the scooter on which the assailants had fled to Karol Bagh, the Makens were taken out on their last journey to the Nigambodh burning ghat. Thousands, from VIPs to simple trade union workers formed part of the procession. Slogans of "Lalit

Maken amar rahen" were made. Earlier, at the New Tilak Marg residence of the Makens, where the bodies of the couple were kept, Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi and other important colleagues of his came to pay their last respects. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the Andhra Pradesh Governor and father-in-law of Maken was also present. Also present was the seven-year-old daughter of the Makens looking lost amidst the mourners. Avantika Maken stood alongside her mother's flower bedecked body all through, clutching her grandfather's hands, barely understanding what actually had happened or what she had to do. At one point she kissed her mother's face and then poignantly withdrew, unaware that her tragedy had just begun.

Sanjiv Thakur and Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

G. M. Shah's Uncertain Future

Will the Congress(I) withdraw support?



The summons to all senior Jammu and Kashmir Congress(I) leaders and legislators from New Delhi in mid July had led to speculation about the impending changes in the political set up of the state. Even after three days of hectic politicking in the capital, a clear picture of the political situation did not emerge. Perhaps, the Congress(I) leadership at the centre and in the state would prefer to maintain the status quo while they finalise their 'Kashmir

policy'. But it is clear that the Congress(I) has revised its stand on the one year old Ghulam Mohammed Shah government. This reportedly brought the Jammu and Kashmir chief minister rushing to New Delhi to plead his case immediately after the departure of the state Congress(I) leaders.

G.M. Shah and the 1st Conference Khalida (NC K) President, Mrs Khalida Shah met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at his residence for

over an hour on 29 July. What transpired has become the subject of a debate. A press note issued immediately after the talks by the Jammu and Kashmir information department, said the Prime Minister had "assured G.M. Shah of continued support to his government" and that he had also accepted his invitation to inaugurate the Festival of Kashmir which is to begin in Srinagar some time in October this year. The NC(K) Congress(I) friendship according to the Shah camp continues. But political sources claim that the meeting was not as cordial as Gulshah made it out to be. The Jammu and Kashmir chief minister all through the meeting, tried to convince the Prime Minister that the talk about corruption and maladministration in his state was not true.

Rajiv Gandhi also expressed his concern to Shah about the worsening law and order situation in the state. The continuing uncertainty and the ineffectiveness of the Shah government have given enough opportunities to organisations like the Jamaat-i-Islami to spread communal trouble in the Valley. The Shah government, after it had come to power, claimed it was more secular than the previous government. Now, under the same G.M. Shah government, secularism faces a threat. The Congress(I) is rapidly losing popular support. Its leaders feel that the party is losing its base by propping up an unpopular and corrupt regime. After the J and K Congress(I) conference at Aharbal in June, during which party leaders strongly condemned the performance of the Gulshah government and criticised their own party's support to it, the drift away from Gulshah really began. In fact, the central

leadership of the Congress(I) has, in principle, decided to withdraw support from the Gulshah government. It is only a matter of time before they actually take that step. The reason is simple: the Congress(I) no longer wants to take the risk of sharing the blame with C M Shah.

The Congress(I) is not decided on its plan of action in the state. The high command, it is learnt, has already ruled out any possibility of the J and K Congress(I) unit joining the government of Gulshah. Nor is

the party keen on Governor's rule, which has been recommended by the J and K Governor Jagmohan and Farooq Abdullah's National Conference (F). The Congress(I) does not relish the idea of elections before 1989. What policy will the Congress(I) adopt if it is to withdraw support from the Gulshah government? It is this search for alternatives that is forcing the Congress(I) to maintain status quo in Jammu and Kashmir.

Senkarshan Thakur, New Delhi

INDIRA GANDHI ASSASSINATION TRIAL

Was There a Post-mortem?

The witnesses give evidence in court

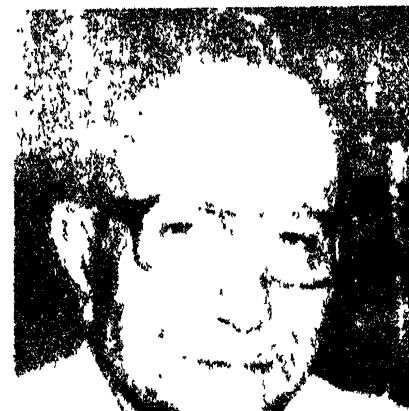
For all those present inside the makeshift courtroom of Tihar Jail, it was as if the darkest moments in the country's history were being relived. From 8 July, the second session of the Indira Gandhi assassination trial commenced, with the cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses. The crucial events that led to the assassination were disclosed to the court being conducted by additional sessions judge, Mahesh Chandra inside the jail premises. The proceedings gained momentum, and by the end of 11 July, witnesses had deposed before the court and faced cross-examination. The prosecution however kept the defence counsel and the press attending the trial guessing on the line-up and number of witnesses who would be called to court. By the end of three weeks, it was clear that not all of the 144 witnesses listed in the charge-sheet would be produced before the court. In spite of the repeated demands by P.N. Lekhi, defence counsel for Satwant Singh, that the two "VIP eye-witnesses" in the case, R.K. Dhawan, special assistant to the late Prime Minister and M.L. Fotedar, her political adviser be called in for cross-examination first, the prosecution remained silent on when the two would be called.

The chief public prosecutor, K.L. Arora was unwilling to disclose how many witnesses would be cross-examined and said, "We will not complete the list and Dhawan and Fotedar are on the list. The number of people to depose will depend upon the proceedings of the case. Till date, we have examined some of the witnesses who are most crucial in the Satwant Singh case including record witnesses, medical witnesses and eye-witnesses." The strategy of the prosecution which was called "mischievous" by Lekhi has been asked

to first present before the court those witnesses whose evidence would prove most damaging against the prime accused. "After our first case has been won, we will cross-examine witnesses in the list of 144, who are relevant for charges faced by Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh," said Arora.

Among the witnesses who have faced cross-examination, four are of utmost importance to the eventual outcome of the case. They are three eye-witnesses, Nathu Ram, Mrs Gandhi's personal valet, head constable Narain Singh and assistant sub-inspector Rameshwar Dayal, who also received bullet injuries and Dr T.D. Dogra, assistant professor of forensic medicine, AIIMS, who had conducted the post-mortem on the Prime Minister's body. Narain Singh the first eye-witness examined, describing the events before a packed courtroom said, "We were at a distance of 10 feet from the TMC gate when I noticed Beant Singh standing on the left and Satwant Singh on the right...Beant Singh took out a revolver from his right side and fired at the Prime Minister. Immediately thereafter Satwant Singh, too, started firing at her." According to Arora, the detailed eye witness accounts of the six eye-witnesses in

P.N. Lekhi: defence counsel



the case (Narain Singh, Ramji Lal, Rameshwar Dayal, D.K. Bhatt, R.K. Dhawan and M.L. Fotedar) should be vital evidence against the accused.

In the cross-examinations conducted so far, the verdict of the forensic expert of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Dr T.D. Dogra who was present in court on 16 July was equally important. The forensic expert faced scathing cross-examination from P.N. Lekhi who demanded, "Were you directed to do post-mortems or were you doing a farce? It is very surprising that you took out only two bullets from the body of Beant Singh and two bullets from the body of Mrs Indira Gandhi." Dr Dogra replied, "Neither was I asked nor had I done any farce in this." Another aspect of the cross-examination of the medical witness which caused a flutter in the courtroom was the disclosure that the post-mortem on the late Prime Minister is recorded to have been conducted after 3 pm on the afternoon of 31 October, the same time when the Prime Minister is said to have been given 15 pints of blood. Says Lekhi: "I have proven through my examination of Dr Dogra that there was no post-mortem conducted on Mrs Gandhi at all."

While the recording of evidence and presentation of circumstantial evidence quickened the pace of proceedings, a sensational development occurred when two of the prosecution witnesses were placed before the court by defence counsel P.P. Grover who alleged that they were being harassed by members of the investigating team. Two persons listed as witnesses, including Rajinder Singh, son of Kehar Singh, also in the list of 144 witnesses, had been detained earlier by the investigators under the National Security Act. The two witnesses who wanted the protection of the court, Virendra Singh and Gurbax Singh filed applications alleging harassment and illegal detention in the Yamuna Velodrome where they were interrogated by the investigators. Gurbax Singh complained to sessions judge Mahesh Chandra, "The investigation team headed by R.P. Korchhar asked me to turn approver and make a statement." Now, says Lekhi with complaints of harassment of some witnesses and the faulty evidence being given by other witnesses examined by me, I will see to it that the court is forced to examine all 144 witnesses. The proceedings in past few weeks have shown that the prosecution will no longer be able to boast of finishing the case by calling only ten witnesses as they had once claimed."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

SMUGGLING

Prize Catch

Contraband seized in Bombay

The Rs 2 crore contraband haul which included video cassette recorders, wrist watches and foreign made textiles on 12 July at the Bombay docks was described as the Directorate of Revenue and Intelligence's (DRI) biggest non-gold seizure in three years. The ship, *Jumna Pioneer*, a United States shipping line registered in Singapore arrived at Bombay harbour on 12 July. It was supposed to have been carrying four containers with 1,200 drums containing 60,000 kg of the chemical acrylamide, used for the manufacture of acrylic sheets. On suspicion, the drums were examined, and it was found that there were only 100 drums which contained about 5,000 kgs of chemicals. The others contained 2,27,000 yards of textiles worth Rs 73.05 lakhs, 701 VCRs worth Rs 91.70 lakhs and 37,300 wrist watches valued at Rs 27.70 lakhs. The consignee is missing and the address fictitious. This method is one of the many being employed at the airport and the Bombay docks to ply contraband.

DRI officials, however, had kept a strict watch and a woman, Victoria Donna Vaz, suspected to be one of the four persons involved in the deal, was picked up after the DRI seized a large number of incriminating documents including the packing list. Her former employer, Bharat Nandlal Kalyani, a businessman residing at Bandra in the city's western suburbs, is suspected to be the mastermind behind the operation. Kalyani is the owner of an export-import firm B K International, B.K. Electronics and is a partner in the Shaco Construction Company. "Judging from the size of the consignment, he has obviously managed to smuggle in smaller amounts of contraband in the past. No arrests have been made so far, but besides Victoria, we have questioned a number of his employees," DRI deputy director, A.P. Kala told SUNDAY Kalyani was allegedly involved in a case last year in which the customs seized textiles worth Rs 15 lakhs from a warehouse at Wadala in central Bombay.

The free ports of Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai are the main sources of contraband supply according to the DRI. On 16 March this year, a non-existent consignee imported watches worth Rs 70 lakhs which were intercepted by the DRI at the air cargo complex. They were

coming from Hong Kong. Another major seizure made by the DRI at Delhi airport in August last year was a Rs 1.05 crore consignment of mini computers, calculators and wrist watches.

Gold figures high on the list of favourites in the smuggling trade. The DRI seized gold worth Rs three crores at Sion Circle in April while Rs 4.08 crore worth of gold were seized by the customs of Haji Bunder this February and 1,560 gold biscuits with Swiss markings weighing ten tolas and 12 one kilo bars recovered.

The total haul of smuggled gold in the first four months of the year, amounting to over Rs 12 crores has already exceeded total seizures made in 1984.

A large number of the recent gold smuggling cases involved persons coming from the Gulf countries. In May this year, at least five major gold seizures were made, three of which were at the Sahar airport and gold worth Rs 36 lakhs was recovered from passengers.

Lekha Dhar, Bombay

BOMBAY

Unfare Tactics

The general secretary of the Bombay Taximen's Union (BTU), A.L. Quadros, has blamed a section of the taxi drivers in the city for the tarnished image that taximen have. He told SUNDAY that most of them belong to the BTU and is planning to appeal to the traffic police, the well-known social organisations like Lions club and Rotary club as well as leading citizens to help to discipline the errant taximen. The BTU has about 25,000 members out of nearly one lakh taximen operating in the city. A managing committee meeting of the union will be held on 30 July and a general body meeting on 4 August, to discuss the problems taximen face with the police and customers.

The need to refurbish the image of taximen has assumed a certain urgency following the spate of anti-taximen letters that appeared in the wake of the film serial *Rajani* which had shown the taximen as "abductors of women" who also refuse fares, and fleece customers. Mr Quadros said this is only one

side of the story and it was unfair on the taxi drivers. He said, "We have no grudge against the film serial, the actress or the producer." He also denied that the taximen have threatened Priya Tendulkar, the star of *Rajani*. Quadros was reacting to a report that said Priya Tendulkar was being harassed by taximen which is why she is not allowed by her playwright father Vijay Tendulkar, to travel alone in taxis. Quadros complained of harassment at the hands of the police, and every successive traffic police commissioner, he said, has failed to resolve this problem of their traffic constables demanding *hafta* (protection money) from honest taximen.

Mr Quadros said that at Dadar railway station where long distance trains arrive, taximen in the queue have to pay Rs ten per day to the constable on that beat. Those who pay the *hafta* are allowed to break the queue. The situation is so bad that at noon when the Madras Mail arrives, there are barely 50 to 60 taxis, the others being scared to go there. Mr Quadros also alleged that the four constables collect Rs 200 daily, from the Churchgate-Nariman Point shuttle-taxi drivers. At various other points like Marine Lines, Dawa Bazar, Grant Road and Phydonic, constables also collect money. By noon, the price rises to Rs ten per taxi. If taxis do not pay, the constables find some excuse to fine them for soliciting or not standing in the queue. The worst areas he said, are the Oberoi hotel, the Taj hotel and other hotels where unscrupulous taximen fleece clients bound for Sahar airport, for fares ranging from Rs 200 to Rs 500.

Oiga Tellis, Bombay



Priya Tendulkar in *Rajani*

ORISSA

Is J.B. Patnaik Guilty ?

CM accused of having a Swiss Bank account

The saffron clad Congress(I) rebel, Prasanna Kumar Patsani has lived up to his word. He had told the people of his constituency during his campaign, for the crucial 24 April Assembly by election in Khurda, in which he defeated the chief minister J. B. Patnaik's nominee, Dr Baidyanath Mishra, that he was aware of "many acts of corruption and nepotism" by J. B. Patnaik and that he would "expose" them in the Legislative Assembly. But political pundits in the state had not dismissed his statements as a stunt by a politician, who having been denied a party ticket was taking his "revenge" on the CM Patsani before his fall from grace. Along with Basant Kumar Biswal one of Patnaik's confidants. He had ready access to Patnaik and had even run secret errands for him.

During the July budget session of the Assembly Patsani had alleged that the chief minister had deposited crores of rupees in a bank in Zurich, Switzerland in 1982. The allegation was made on 9 July when Patnaik was present in the house. The chief minister, however, preferred to remain silent and one week later gave a 'personal explanation' and described Patsani's charge as "imaginary and irresponsible". The CM challenged Patsani to prove his charge or resign from the Assembly. If the charge was true, said Patnaik, he

would resign from the membership of the House. Patnaik suggested that the Speaker of the House be entrusted with the investigation with Patsani having to provide the evidence.

Patsani immediately rose to his feet to accept Patnaik's challenge, but was shouted down by Congress(I) MLAs. But Patsani, backed by the opposition, reiterated his "right" to reply to the chief minister and demanded the formation of a house committee under the speaker's chairmanship to probe into his allegation. He said that a broader forum like this committee could examine all the relevant documents including those to be produced by him.

When asked what documents he could have in mind, especially when he himself said the accounts in Swiss banks are maintained in high security, Patsani told SUNDAY "That is why I demand a fuller inquiry. The government must place all the files relating to the visit of the former minister of works and mining and geology, Basant Kumar Biswal, to Switzerland in late 1982. Mr Biswal went to Europe ostensibly to sign an agreement with an Austrian firm (Voest Alpine) for a collaboration with the state owned Orissa Mining Corporation (OMC) to establish a chrome plant in Orissa. He had no

business to go there at government expense since the job could be achieved by the officers, he added. In fact, the officers finally signed the contract. What was the need for Mr Biswal to move to Switzerland before returning to India? Let all his air tickets from Delhi to Zurich and back be produced. Let it be verified if the tickets for his Zurich trip were paid for by him personally or by the government or by others. I demand to know how and for what purpose a minister visited Zurich. I have requested the honourable chief minister to produce all documents, but the challenge has not been accepted. Rather, the chief minister has avoided it. And as far as my resignation from the membership of the Assembly is concerned, in effect, I have done it by throwing this challenge to him." "The CM wanted to keep quiet the day I made the disclosure," he added. "He should have replied immediately as I accepted his challenge. Instead, he took seven days during which he might have tampered with the government document. He would not have come out with a personal explanation but for the fear of adverse publicity."

When asked about the controversy, Basant Kumar Biswal defended his visit to Switzerland on the grounds that it was "a practice" for someone in the government to tour some other country, in addition to the ones he visited for official business. He first argued in favour of his trip to Europe saying, "My visit was intended to expedite the matter and the finalisation of the collaboration contract with a consortium consisting of the Austrian firm Voest Alpine and a Finnish company Auto Kumpu. Mr L. I. Parija, the former chairman of the OMC and at present the state's additional chief secretary had earlier gone for the job but had not succeeded. I talked to the chairman of Voest Alpine and it helped in sorting out the matters. A clause bracket in the original draft agreement which would have meant a possible financial disaster to the OMC was deleted from the final document." The clause related to the demand of compensation in the event of copying the design of certain equipment and their manufacture in India. Biswal, while admitting that he was not a signatory to the agreement, stressed that his presence during the talks with the foreign firms lent weight to the proceeding and clinched the contract. It was D. P. Bagchi, the then managing director of the OMC, who signed the agreement with the OMC's chairman L. I. Parija and director of mines, B. K. Mohanty.

Sarada, P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar



(1 to r) Jayanti Patnaik, J.B. Patnaik and Patsani: in happier times

RAJASTHAN

Hiding the Truth

Attempt by chief secretary to pressurise the newspapers

Close on the heels of the tenth anniversary of the Emergency the chief secretary (CS) of the Rajasthan government reminded the people of the *modus operandi* of the Emergency. It all began in the last week of May this year when the chief secretary Mr Anand Mohan Lal got an inkling that *Rajasthan Patrika* was planning to publish a story on his misuse of power and government funds during the celebration of his wedding anniversary (reported by SUNDAY, 14-20 July 1985). The reporter and the management of the paper were approached by the CS through his "well wishers" to withhold the story but both refused to oblige. Undeterred, the *Rajasthan Patrika* published a pictorial account

of the extravaganza. But this was only the beginning of the story.

On 5 July, raising the matter of the wedding anniversary of the CS, the leader of the opposition Bhairon Singh Shekhawat observed in the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha that it was shameful that public money was being squandered in such a fashion. "It was all the more shameful that the Governor too, not only participated but drank publicly at that function," he said. He went on to add that had there been any government worth the name in the state, the chief secretary would have been dismissed by now. As soon as Mr Shekhawat finished his speech, a number of government officials swung into action. With instructions from Mr Lal,

the department of information and public relations planned a strategy to see that Shekhawat's observations about the CS did not appear in the next day's papers. Over half a dozen groups consisting of officials of the department along with some "friends" of the CS visited newspaper offices to ask the editors not to publish Mr Shekhawat's comments. These persons remained in the offices throughout the night till the last editions of the newspapers were published. Amazingly, barring *Rajasthan Patrika* none of the news papers carried the "undesirable" remarks. But all the newspapers did not succumb to the pressure from the officials. In fact, some of the journalists had initially refused to oblige and a recently launched English daily carried a big story in its city edition but withdrew the same from the late city edition. The services of an ex-director of public relations and many other IAS officers were also engaged besides the present head of the public relations department, to

"The Rajasthan Canal is Our Lifeline. We Will Not Allow it to be Destroyed..."

Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, leader of the opposition in the Rajasthan Assembly, told SUNDAY

Q: What is your reaction to the Punjab agreement between Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal?

A: The agreement is against the interests of the state of Rajasthan. Rajasthan's share in the waters of the rivers Ravi, Beas and Sutlej was fixed at eight million acre feet (MAF) by an agreement as long back as in 1955. This share has never been questioned in any agreement. The dispute in relation to the distribution of waters has hitherto remained confined to the states of Punjab and Haryana. The 1981 and 1984 agreements between the states also did not disturb the share allocation of Rajasthan. But the Rajiv Longowal agreement tends to reopen this already well settled question.

Q: The Rajasthan chief minister says that the apprehensions are baseless as the agreement between the two leaders has nowhere questioned the 1955 agreement. Rather, he says, the 1955 agreement will be the base for adjudication.

A: The chief minister is mistaken. In fact, the 1955 agreement will be

the real casualty. If this is not so, why would the words "Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan will continue to get water not less than what they are using from the Ravi Beas system as on 1.7.1985" have been incorporated in the agreement? Our current share as per the agreement of 1955 is 8.6 MAF. Why then has a ceiling been put on drawing of water by Rajasthan along with Punjab and Haryana? The very fact that Rajasthan has also been mentioned leaves none in doubt that the 1955 agreement is going to be reopened and this will be disastrous for the people of Rajasthan.

Q: The CM's contention is that too much is being read into clause 9(1) as clause 9(2) stipulates adjudication of the shares of Punjab and Haryana only.

A: If this was so why was Rajasthan's name added to clause 9(1)? Why was Rajasthan too subjected to the ceiling? It must be remembered that not a single word is mentioned without purpose in such agreements. In this case the purpose of adding Rajasthan's name

was to deprive Rajasthan of its legitimate share of the waters. Our past experience with Punjab in interstate matters has not been a happy one. It has not yet handed over the management of the headworks to the Bhakra-Beas management board despite repeated decisions. It releases water in the Rajasthan canal and Gang canals, not according to our requirements but as per its own whims. Despite clear-cut agreements, Punjab has deprived us of our share of power in various schemes based on the waters of the three rivers. The government of India and the Akalis have in fact conspired against Rajasthan by adding Rajasthan's name in clause 9(1). This agreement is bound to hamper our plans to quench the thirst of the vast areas of the desert through the Rajasthan canal. We have spent about Rs 1000 crores on the Rajasthan canal project and now its very base, the availability of water, is being thrown into the realm of uncertainty. The Rajasthan canal is our lifeline. And we will not allow it to be destroyed.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

stop the publications of the proceedings of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha. On 15 July, *Rajasthan Patrika* published a story describing how the government machinery burnt midnight oil to suppress the publication of the observations made by a leader of the opposition against the chief secretary on the floor of the house. BJP MLAs Ghanshyam Tiwari and Ms Pushpa Jain accordingly moved a breach of privilege motion against

the state information and public relations department. Under pressure from the opposition, the speaker Heeralal Deopura admitted the motion for the consideration of the privileges committee and agreed to allow the members to discuss the matter in the house even before the privileges committee took up the matter.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

BIHAR

A Troubled Reign

Chief minister Bindeswari Dubey faces problems

The reign of chief minister Bindeswari Dubey promises to be a stormy and eventful one. Though he was elected CM by the Bihar Congress Legislature Party (I) over five months ago and sworn in with the blessings of his mentor Jagannath Mishra, his position because of the interference by the Congress(I) high command in Delhi and the resurgence of his old rival Chandra Shekhar Singh's group, remains shaky.

Mr Dubey appeared to have been badly humiliated when the party high command rejected the two names he had suggested as the Governor's nominees to the Bihar Legislative Council. The nomination eventually went to Prof Nagendra

Jha, an arch rival of the CM's mentor Jagannath Mishra, at the instance of the former chief minister and union minister for textiles, Chandra Shekhar Singh. An equally major blow for the chief minister was the resignation of Kamalnath Singh Thakur, the chief party whip. Thakur was asked to step down just after his successful attempt to prove that he had not been elected to the council as an independent and later defected to the Congress(I) which is disallowed under the Anti-defection Act. The Congress(I) legislature party leader Arun Kumar also ruled that Thakur had joined the party before the act became operative.

For the two vacant seats in the Legislative Council, the chief minis-

ter had recommended Vijay Shankar Mishra and Tulsi Razak. One seat is yet to be filled but it is clear that Razak's name is likely to be turned down. The chief minister has, however, been silent on the issue and appears to have quietly accepted the high command's view. What is likely to erode Mr Dubey's position even more is the possible return of Chandra Shekhar Singh into state politics. Mr Singh had flown straight to Delhi after his defeat in the state legislature party polls without taking his oath in the Legislative Assembly. He is yet to become a member of Parliament and he will have to take his oath as an MLA either by mid-September or surrender his right to be one.

The party high command, aware that Dubey's political guru Dr Jagannath Mishra has a major say in the state administration, is believed to be planning to move Mishra out by appointing him the Governor of another state or by giving him a diplomatic assignment. "No one can force me out of the state," thundered Dr Mishra, when asked whether he had received any offers. But according to a senior leader of the party high command, one of the Prime Minister's aides prefers C.S. Singh to Dubey. But much depends on whether Dr Mishra complies with the high command's decision as he enjoys support of a large number of party leaders as well as part of the opposition.

Dr Mishra's speech at a teachers' meeting in Sahibganj was a major embarrassment for the government but the chief minister has preferred to keep a low profile. With the C.S. Singh lobby already against him, criticising Mishra is likely to be a dangerous move for Dubey. Dr Mishra has also been strongly critical of the government in the Legislative Assembly and has recently accused the centre of "stepmotherly treatment" which he felt is responsible for the state's backwardness. Such statements had cost him the chief minister's chair in July 1983 but this time he had nothing to lose and in fact won applause from even the opposition for championing the state's cause.

According to observers, though Dubey has taken independent decisions during his five-month tenure, his fate is likely to be decided by Mishra's decisions. If the former chief minister decides to flout the party high command's directives, the resultant political instability in the state could lead to the fall of the Bindeswari Dubey government.

Yubraj Ghimire, Patna



Bindeswari Dubey (left) with Jagannath Mishra: old friends

EDUCATION

Degrees of Fraud

Extensive forging of mark-lists by medical students

It was a 1981 High Court judgement ordering the revaluation of a few pre-degree answer papers that blew the cover off a mark list forgery racket. As the people of Kerala looked on, a deluge of mark list forgery detections followed. Many medical students were accused of perpetrating a fraud on society. They had used chemical erasers to change their marks or 'bought' new mark lists to gain admission to professional colleges.

The government promised a "thorough enquiry" but a random check revealed that bureaucrats, professionals and politicians and their wards were also directly involved. And the enquiry turned into a farce though the facade of impartiality was maintained. A commission of enquiry headed by a sitting judge, M.P. Menon was constituted and sleuths were engaged to look into the forged records in the Kerala and Calicut universities. After the commission's term was over, a special court was constituted and by 1984, the court had begun convicting people. Some students of the final year MBBS were also found to have forged mark lists.

The Supreme Court soon ordered that separate admission tests should

be conducted for medical and engineering courses for those who pass the pre-degree course. An assistant registrar of the Kerala university, Mr Asokan who was allegedly selling forged mark lists to those aspiring to be doctors and engineers, was suspended. The special court headed by the additional chief judicial magistrate Vijayaraghavan has started convicting many of the accused. Two students, Jaymol Mary Jacob (cc 20/83) and K. Sathish (cc 6/84) who had appealed against their convictions were sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment and to one year's rigorous imprisonment respectively. A total of 83 cases of forgery was detected and FIRs for 31 have been filed. But 52 FIRs are pending and only one charge was filed in 1985.

But behind this facade of a massive clean-up, important facts are being suppressed to save some 'big names.' How did the big sharks get away? An investigation by SUNDAY has revealed that attempts were made to bribe the sleuths investigating into the racket before threatening them. Whopping sums of money changed hands and senior police officers were bought off in order to benefit some vested interests.

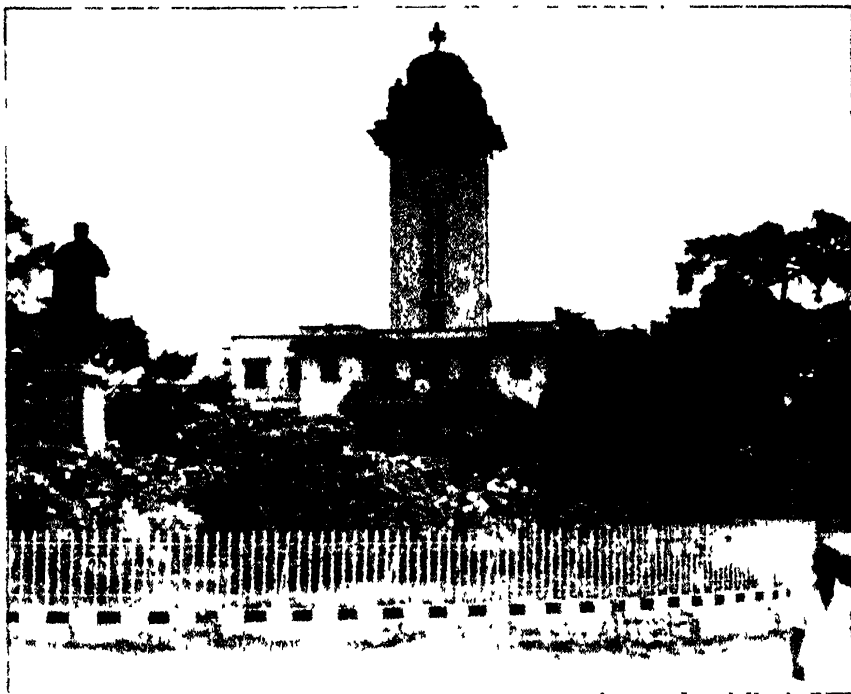
Within a few weeks of the first police investigation, one of the officers stumbled upon evidence which proved that the forgery was a professional job. It was then that the team first realised that big names were involved. Soon after, there was a letter from DIG B. S. Sastry (DO No. D3-36558/crimes/81 dated 14-12-1981) authorising the removal of the head of the investigating team V. A. Jolly. Mohammad Khan, DYSP, was put in charge of the investigation. However, a few top officers who were keen on having Jolly on the case saw that he was reinstated but this time he had to work under Mr Khan.

In the course of the investigation the team had written to the vice-chancellor of the Kerala university asking for some crucial records. This time the reply was sent by the superintendent of police P. Moidu. The tone of his letter (448/CB/SR/82) was stern. "Why do you require this to be done? Has it anything to do with the cases under investigation by you?" The letter was addressed again to Jolly who made a futile effort to obtain them. "We are not dictating, we are only requesting the university and medical colleges to verify, to clear the longstanding vehement allegations of manipulation of marks in the answer books." There was no further information from the university.

The big sharks had also tried to keep some of the efficient officers, especially V. A. Jolly out of the way. DIG B. S. Sastry detailed Jolly in a letter No. D1/20804/crimes/81, to chase the ace conman and embezzler Sitaram who had been involved in a fraud worth crores of rupees from a Gulf travel firm. But again the IG interfered and on the eve of Jolly's departure to shadow Sitaram, he was asked to stay back and continue with the mark list investigating team.

Working against odds, the team finally arrested Dr Thomas Chandy, a wealthy, well-known doctor for helping to forge his son's mark list and getting him admitted to the J. N. Medical College, Davangere. The team requested (through the SP Crime Branch, CID) government action against Thomas Chandy. The reply again came to Jolly in the form of an explanation notice from B.S. Sastry himself and dated 25 March 1982: "The DYSP will explain why he has corresponded directly with the government." The allegation itself was a lie as the letter was routed through the proper channel.

When the Justice M. P. Menon Commission was appointed to suggest ways to detect and remedy this deep-rooted malaise DSP Jolly asked



The Kerala University campus: scene of crime

permission to testify before the commission. He was immediately sent to Delhi for a six-week training in a computer course. While he was away he was suspended for abuse of official position in a letter No. DO 2942/82/home.

The assistant commissioner of police who enquired whether Jolly had interfered anywhere in the case cleared him. But the suspension order dated 9 November 1982 insisted that Jolly was guilty. Among others in the investigating team was a circle inspector Sunny Abraham, who according to another constable, was a 'plant' and he was not cooperating or obeying orders. A sub-inspector R. Thankappan was taken away for "special duties." In fact, the fraud detection team received very little help from the higher authorities. The efficient officers were gradually taken away.

One of the early arrests made in connection with the mark list scandal was that of Dr Pulickan Verghese and his son Thomas Pulickan. Before his bail application was to be heard, Dr Verghese "convinced" the then assistant public prosecutor (APP)

that he should not appear in court when his bail application is heard. The APP who was either threatened or bribed did not appear. The bail was granted and an important man, a crucial suspect got away scot free. Jolly wrote to the collector asking his permission to hire the APP of Punalur to appear against the bail application. The collector rejected the request. Another memo from B. S. Sastry D3-6667/crimes/82 followed which made his intentions very clear: "The SP of police, Crime Branch, Trivandrum should keep the officer (Jolly) in check." The accusation was: "corresponding directly with the district collector."

Among the big-time financiers who are indirectly connected with the case and who are not likely to be brought to book are Itook Ambookan and some prominent members of the Kannichayi group which owns several hotels in south India. Students who wanted forged mark lists approached Ambookan who had contacts with the forgers. But he has covered his tracks.

The rise of the Kannichayi group has been phenomenal. The group includes many top Congress(I) mem-

bers including an MLA. Investigations have revealed that this MLA had tried to 'influence' at least two investigating personnel. The Ambookan-Kanichayi nexus was one of the vital powers behind the forged mark list racket but it appears that they will never be charged. Even though only one officer V.A. Jolly was suspended (the High Court later reinstated him) many other honest sleuths were shuffled around.

These are just a miniscule part of the shady goings on. Only the written orders which were meant to block the progress of the investigations can be exposed. But policemen have often been orally informed about their tasks. For instance, when an important politician's (now an MP) daughter was also about to be booked, the then minister in charge asked at least two of the investigating officers to keep mum. On yet another occasion, the investigating officers were promised 'unlimited wealth.' Considering the high stakes involved, it is a marvel that a special court has been allowed to function without political interference.

Sinoo John, Trivandrum

NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

The Search for a New Chairman

The next NAM meeting is likely to be held in Africa

A big question arises as to who will take over the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which is due for a change early next year. Since Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania and chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)—expressed his inability to take over the reins when sounded out recently by the present chairman, Rajiv Gandhi's special envoy, on the grounds that he was stepping down from office in October, the field is open and the competition, keen.

Nyerere who will step down from office but remain leader of his party, was the obvious choice. Sub-Saharan Africa is the most likely venue of the NAM meeting because the two of the three NAM meetings in Africa have taken place in Arab Africa: Egypt and Algeria since the foundation of NAM. Moreover, Africa is also a logical choice as the issue of Namibia remains unsolved.

Baghdad, however, is still in the running. The New Delhi declaration (paragraph 95) of 1983, overwhelmingly supported the candidature of Baghdad, for whom India had to fill

in as a draft-in candidate because the Iran-Iraq war was going on. The resolution also said that the final decision would be taken during the foreign ministerial meeting in Luanda in September 1985. The war is not over and a very few countries have directly offered to hold the meeting. India is far from reluctant to remain the chairman of the NAM movement if a meeting place is not decided upon.

Under serious consideration at present, however, is Robert Mugabe, the outspoken and articulate Prime

Minister of Zimbabwe. He has recently won an election and is also in the running for the OAU chairmanship. But South Africa is the thorny issue for NAM and some of the ASEAN countries are probably going to vehemently oppose the candidature of Mugabe. The other weighty figures in Africa are not eligible. Leopold Senghor, the distinguished poet-politician has voluntarily retired from office and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia has already been the chairman of NAM.

It appears that the country which is very keen to hold the summit but has not said it directly (for all serious candidates have to be oblique because they can withdraw gracefully if not chosen), is Yugoslavia. Apparently, Yugoslavia is working towards getting itself drafted, on the plea that there is no other contender. They have pressed for an early decision and have kept stressing the need for an active leadership and regular terms. The latter signifies regular intervals between summits: between Cairo and Lusaka there was a six year break.

The argument for Yugoslavia, one of the original founders of the movement, is that 1986 is the twentieth anniversary of the Belgrade summit. One of the problems that Yugoslavia faces, other than the fact that it has already hosted a NAM summit and that its being chosen would indicate



Mugabe



Nyerere

that only seven of the 101 countries of NAM are eligible to host the summit, is that Yugoslavia has a rotating system of presidency. During the New Delhi summit, Libya, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wanted to field themselves as candidates for the eighth summit. As did Iraq. But though Iran, Syria and Libya opposed Iraq's candidature, Baghdad was clearly the consensus choice since there was an absence of consensus for the other three.

Indonesia has also hinted that it is willing to host the meet. During the 30th anniversary of the Bandung con-

ference in April this year, Indonesia had invited many Asian and African countries and suggested that it had the requisite infrastructure to host a NAM summit. During his recent visit to Latin America, the Indonesian premier Mr Mukhtiar did indicate that Indonesia would not be interested in hosting NAM as long as Iraq was in the running, in other words they would not say no. Nor of course would India; NAM leadership certainly enhanced the image of Rajiv Gandhi, and India continues to be a reliable standby, if nothing is decided soon.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Channel Four Furore

Rajiv Gandhi's interview on British TV draws criticism

That Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi allowed himself to be interviewed by *Eastern Eye* a programme for the Asian minority on British TV's Channel Four, came as a surprise to many knowledgeable people. In fact, his first interview to an international television network had been given to Channel Four and when the PM utilised the same outlet, ignoring the claims of mainline stations and programmes like BBC and ITV, *Panorama* and *Weekend World*, eyebrows were raised once again.

Besides, *Eastern Eye* was being wound up (the Rajiv interview was the last but one of the fortnightly instalments) for its alleged immaturity in handling South Asian political issues. The producers of this programme had once embarrassed the late Dr Seyid Muhammad, the then Indian high commissioner to the United Kingdom, asking him to take part in a studio discussion which had among its participants, the self-styled Khalistan leader, Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan, whose presence was not previously notified to the diplomat. The same people had produced an anti-Indian programme on Kashmir following the murder of Ravindra Mhatre, the Birmingham-based Indian consular officer, last year, which, in fact, led to Dr Muhammad lodging a personal as well as an official protest with the British foreign minister, Sir Geoffrey Howe. Indeed, apart from the fact that the Indian assessment of the dispute was not given adequate attention, some extremists from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were permitted to get away

with inflammatory remarks such as: "*Khoon ka badla khoon* (an eye for an eye)."

Significantly enough, these points were brought to the notice of the Prime Minister's office by the Indian High Commission in London. But the decision regarding responding to *Eastern Eye's* request for an interview was left to Delhi. What, apparently, tilted the scales in *Eastern Eye's* favour was the fact that it enjoyed a wide audience among Asians, including anti-Indian Sikhs and Kashmiris, in Britain. The programme is quite popular because of its attractive coverage of Hindi cinema, with songs from hit movies and interviews with leading actors and actresses.



Rajiv Gandhi

Ashok Varma

The PM, when asked to give a message for the dissenting Sikhs, pointedly turned to the camera and said: "I think they (the Sikhs watching the programme) must realise that Sikhs have been an integral part of India for time immemorial. Ever since Sikhism began, it fought for India's integrity and unity. Sikhs have played a part in our freedom struggle, they've played a part in the building of India and they're playing a part even today in taking India ahead. Sikhs have risen well above their numbers in India. There has been no suppression of Sikhs, whether it is in the services, whether it is in business, whether it is in government, whether it is in politics." It was a most unusual exhibition on an independent, professional medium, of a "lecture" in a political broadcast. But then, it was this opening that his information advisers had been seeking.

Why did the PM not use the BBC Asian magazine programme in Hindustani for his placatory statement? Surely, many of the British Sikhs would have understood Hindustani better than English. It seems, in fact, that New Delhi has had a grievance against the British Broadcasting Corporation for its domestic broadcast of interviews with Dr Jagjit Singh Chohan, but these interviews received greater publicity than this Khalistani's other exposures on radio and television in the UK. And if it is considered an indelicate act to encourage Dr. Chohan, then *Eastern Eye* is as guilty as anyone else.

Karan Thapar spoke as much as Gandhi did, and he even lectured the PM on Afghanistan. "Let me say that having visited Afghanistan thrice since the Soviet invasion," Mr Thapar said, "I can tell you that the people of that beleaguered country certainly look on your government's position as a betrayal of friendship." If a representative of an Indian newspaper told Mr Gandhi the same thing in public, he would have immediately branded him as "irresponsible."

According to Mr. Thapar, a large number of Indians living in Britain, have vehemently condemned the *Eastern Eye* interview. That is not to suggest that the interview was not a lively affair. But for Mr Thapar it was as much an exercise in self-aggrandisement as an interview with Rajiv Gandhi. The PM's office, if they were that keen to allow another interview on British television, could have chosen a more respectable programme than *Eastern Eye*.

Ashis Ray, London

Inimitable Actor

Mimicry may be a favourite pastime for some, but to Shababuddin Zuberi, who has developed it to a fine art, it is a preoccupation. Be it the call of a rhinoceros, or the inimitable antics of Peter Sellers, 23-year-old Zuberi can recall them with amazing alacrity. Zuberi first showed signs of his innate talent when, at the age of 11, he started mimicking an actor, after watching a Hindi movie. Ever since, with little encouragement and a lot of perseverance, Zuberi developed an awe-inspiring repertoire: he can imitate a total of 2,500



Zuberi: Ingenious mimic

sounds, including the voices of 146 actors, 62 singers, and the sounds of many wild animals. Zuberi has performed in many cities and won accolades for his unique talents. Recently the Indian Council of Cultural Relations sponsored a programme for the young mimic.

Upstaged

Dolly Thakore, stage actress, is no newcomer to TV—though she is more recognised for her dramatic performance in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Now she will compete with ex-husband Alyque Padamsee and others for Doordarshan's best scripts. A consultant to OBM for selecting sponsored programmes, she is very conscious of the quality of TV productions. "Nobody has a clue to producing scripts", she said. She plans to examine scripts before selling them to agencies, so that premature casualties like *It's a Woman's World* are

avoided. The haphazard manner in which scripts are being chosen came to light when an agency rejected a serial entitled *Babaji ka Bioscope* directed by Siddharth Kak. Eventually Shobha Doctor (of *Humlog* fame) took it up and sold it to Richardson Hindustan Limited. Says Dolly: "For the first time we shall be dealing with a government body which makes it all the more difficult. They do not seem to be clear about what they want." While more agencies are showing an interest in sponsored programmes, and the competition among TV filmmakers is hotting up, Dolly Thakore is sure to have her hands full.

Writer of the Century

Thakazi Sivashankara Pillay, the latest Jnanpith award winner, is in a certain sense, a chronicler of the 20th century. Born during the First World War, he is among the first Indian writers—certainly the first Malayalam writer—to shift the focus from middle class lives to the lives of the downtrodden. Malayalam literature, with his emergence, began dwelling on the vast sections in society below the poverty line. In the year of India's independence came his *Thottiyude Makan* (*The Scavenger's Son*). With *Chemeeen*, his realistic depiction of the lives of fishermen and

fisherwomen of a poor coastal village in Kerala, Thakazi's fame crossed the borders of his own state: he won the Sahitya Akademi award for the novel. When it was filmed, it won the President's gold medal. The *magnum opus* was to come over 20 years later, in 1978, with *Kayar*, in which the central character of the story spanning 250 years is not a person, but a village. The book is about the growth and transformation of this village from the time when the first officer comes to it to the final chapters, sketched against the background of the Naxalite movement. There are over



Thakazi: one more laurel

1,000 characters in this panoramic sweep, which add to the universality of this extraordinary writer. Thakazi is the third Malayalam author to get the prestigious Rs 15 lakh award.

Helping Ethiopia

One of the quickest ways to soften Indian hearts to the plight of Ethiopians on behalf of that country's 150,000 orphans is to show the old Indian-Ethiopian connection. V.V. Paranjpe, former Indian ambassador to Ethiopia who initiated a relief fund for victims of the drought says that the ties between the two nations are old. Not only were the palace guards and those involved in naval warfare in the western coastal area frequently from Ethiopia (Abyssinia), but Malik Amber, one of the smaller of the Peshwa kings also hailed from there, as did apparently Razia Sultan's paramour. There is another link: the present Ethiopian envoy to India, yet to present his credentials, was a student of the Tata Institute of Social Work. His predecessor had left his school-going children behind because the Indian system of education is at a premium. Incidentally, later this year, Amol Palekar's new award-winning film, *Ankahi* will be screened for a charity premiere in aid of the famine victims.

Brilliant Adviser

LK. Jha's recent appointment as adviser to the Prime Minister on administrative reforms is the icing on top of a brilliant career. Jha is an authority on the Indian economy and has written several books on the subject. His previous designations as chairman of the Economic and Administrative Reforms Commission governor of the RBI,

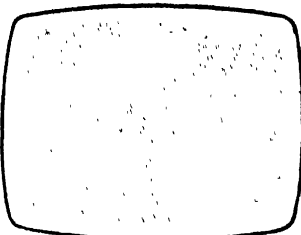


Jha: continuing the good work

and member of the United Nation's working committee on multinational corporations in 1973-74 make an impressive career graph. He also visited London, Washington, Ottawa, Paris, Bonn and Rome as the PM's emissary to explore the possibilities of reviving the North-South dialogue. His appointment as the PM's adviser is a further indication of the government's emphasis on administrative reforms, and a reiteration of faith in Jha's good work.

In an interview published in *India Today*, V.N. Gadgil, minister for information and broadcasting stated that no changes in the policy of airing sponsored programmes were in the offing and that the percentage of total time allotted to such shows were unlikely to be changed from the existing less than five per cent. However, a week later, almost all major dailies reported that instead of one telecast, there would be two sponsored programmes on weekdays: one would begin at 9 pm and the other at 10.20 pm. Mr Gadgil seems to be unaware of what Doordarshan is planning.

Doordarshan is planning to review all sponsored programmes. While all the current serials have got the axe, *Rajni* and *Hum Log* are to be continued indefinitely. Several new serials are lined up for prime time viewing. The first one to go on air will be *Dekho Magar Pyaar Se* by Satish Alekar, one-time assistant to Jabbar Patel. Scheduled to begin on 11 August, the serial has Vivek Vaswani and Soni Razdan in the lead, and is all about the antics of college students. Another serial *Karamchand*, apparently



inspired by the popular detective show *Old Fox* will be replacing *Barrister Vinod* from September. An American serial on astronomy by Dr Carl Sagan, titled *Cosmos* is scheduled to be aired from October. Many other sitcoms, both indigenous and imported are in the pipeline, which promise interesting TV viewing in the future. Some of the programmes which have passed the Doordarshan test and due to be aired are Kundan Shah's *Nukad*, *Tum Log*, which is written by Mrinal Pande, *Aakashganga*, by Kamleshwar, whose name is not new for TV viewers, and Gulzar's *Immortal Women* with Hema Malini in the lead role. Yash Chopra and Satyajit Ray too have decided to entertain TV viewers after their successful exploits in the film world. The Delhi-based ITV has coproduced with Doordarshan, a science serial titled *Nilagrah*. Besides, Sai Paranjpye's



Kumar Gaurav and Shernaz Patel in *Janam*

Dadagini and another serial *Bambai Meri Hai* should also be on the air by the end of this year.

Mahesh Bhatt's latest film *Janam* featuring the struggling Kumar Gaurav, Anupam Kher and newcomer Shernaz Patel in the lead roles is ready for airing on Doordarshan. The film which is likely to be telecast at the end of August has cost its makers, Mudra Communications, Rs 7.5 lakhs. But the producers are making a profit at the very onset: Doordarshan is shelling out 8.5 lakhs for the maiden screening. Mahesh

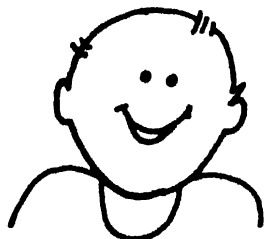
claims that it is even better than his previous ventures: *Arth* and *Saaransh*.

With luck on her side, Shernaz Patel, who plays Kumar Gaurav's girlfriend in *Janam*, seems to be soaring high in the booming TV serial industry. It all began when Vivek Vaswani (of *Khandaan* fame) suggested her name for the film. Vivek was to have done the lead role which was to be made under the Rajshri Productions' banner. However, things did not turn out as expected and Mahesh Bhatt and Mudra Communications came into the picture. Mudra decided to opt for Kumar Gaurav and Vivek was left out in the cold. But Shernaz was luckier. Shernaz has also bagged a role which can make or break her. Writer-director Shridhar Kshirsagar, maker of *Khandaan*, has signed her to play the role of a nurse, who comes into the life of Vinay Premchand, much to the disapproval of his authoritarian tycoon-father. Kshirsagar, who gave her the role without even taking a screen test, is said to be very pleased with Shernaz's performance and plans to give her a longer exposure. *Khandaan* is expected to last till episode number 52, albeit, with the blessings of Doordarshan!



Benjamin Gilani (left) in a still from a forthcoming TV serial *Bambai Meri Hai*

More Vitamin for the Hair

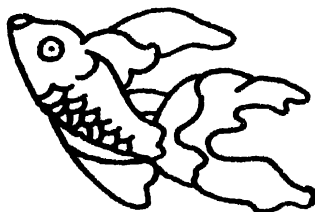


Doctors from the Medical College of Ohio in Toledo, USA, say treatment with biotin, a B vitamin found in small amounts in most foods can tame a rare childhood condition known as "uncombable hair" and could help people with cowlicks or unruly tufts of hair. Dr Walter B. Shelley says that though the hair appears to be normal, they have defects when seen through the microscope. Dr Shelley had used biotin to treat a young boy with uncombable hair because it had been used to promote hair growth in bald babies with nutritional deficiencies.

An Early Onset

The age at which a person is most likely to experience a major depression for the first time has been dropping steadily over this century, according to a study coordinated by researchers at the Harvard Medical School. The study found that while women born in the Thirties were most likely to experience a major depression at about the age of 50, the onset of depression for women born since 1950 is likely to be before the age of 30. While women are more susceptible to depression than men, the difference between men and women in rates of depression seems to be diminishing, the study said.

Goldfish Shows the Way

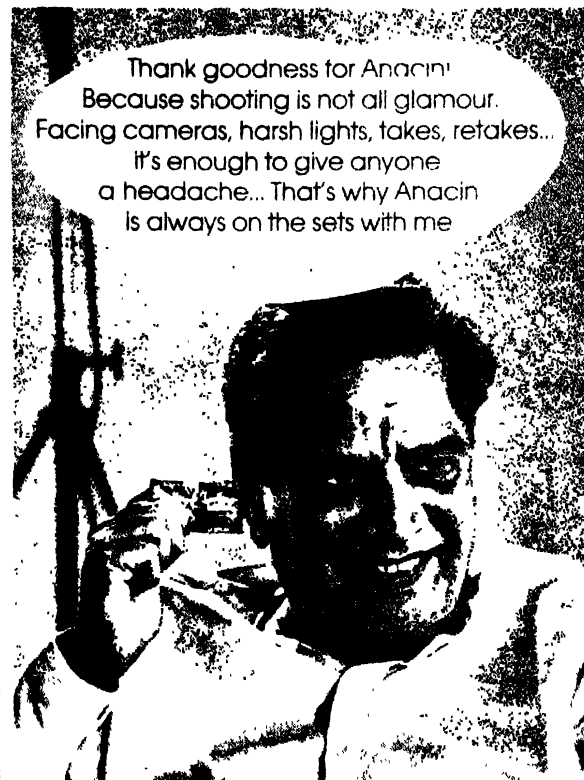


Neurobiologist David Ingle of Rowland Institute of Science, USA, trained a goldfish to recognise the yellow patch in a mosaic of coloured patches all illuminated by white light. After he rearranged the patches, and changed the wavelength of the light source, the goldfish could still pick out the original yellow patch—even though a meter indicated that it reflected primarily green light. Ingle's work is a breakthrough of sorts because the goldfish is not known to possess the visual cortex in its brain. He believes that once he has been able to decipher how the brain of the goldfish works, it would go a long way in understanding the much more complex working of the human brain too.

Monitoring Plant Responses

American scientists at the Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories in the USA believe that they have come up with a device for detecting and measuring plant responses to environmental conditions. Possible uses of the Ceres device, as it is called, include predicting irrigation schedules, evaluating the effect of fertilisers or determining the impact of pollutants. The device is based on the principle that as plants come into contact with the pollutants tiny pores on their leaves called stomates open or close. Opening or closing of the stomates causes a slight change in the diameter of the plant's stem as water is retained or expelled by the plant. This change is detected by the Ceres device, said Dr Peter Beedlow, one of its inventors.

Headaches: The Anacin Solution



ANACIN

It's trusted, like your doctor's prescription

Anacin has more of the pain reliever that doctors the world over recommend. That is why Anacin is so effective for headaches.* And for the aches and pains of colds and flu, toothache, backache and muscular pain.

In a protective foil pack.



* Licensed user of T.M. Geoffrey Manners & Co Ltd

GM-DL 85

BEGINNING 11 AUGUST 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The stars are favourable for you this week. Lovers may go ahead with marriage plans. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. The domestic front will remain peaceful. Your financial status will also improve but avoid extravagance. A journey towards the end of the week will prove financially profitable. A letter will bring good tidings.
Good dates 11, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction North west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Financially this is not a very good week for you. Unless you keep your expenditure to a minimum you will run into heavy debts. Businessmen should avoid risky ventures. However, professionals will make headway during this phase. Lovers will also find this period favourable. Friends and relatives will keep you busy during the weekend. This is a good week for lawyers.
Good dates 13, 15 and 17
Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 6
Favourable direction East



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Petty domestic problems will add to your worries. On the professional front you will come in for criticism from your employers for neglecting work. A close friend may let you down. You may fall ill in the middle of the week. However, businessmen will find this period favourable. Financial prospects are good.
Good dates 12, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 8
Favourable direction South



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is an extremely lucky phase for lovers; you may go ahead with marriage plans. Friends and relatives will prove very helpful. Some of you may gain money or property through an unexpected source. Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. Those above 45 should keep a vigilant eye on their health. A pleasant surprise awaits you.
Good dates 11, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 9
Favourable direction South east



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Those in service will find the period favourable. Businessmen, however, are advised not to take up risky ventures. At home things will remain peaceful. Your financial prospects are also bright. Lovers may proceed with marriage plans. Social engagements will keep you busy but do not neglect your health.
Good dates 12, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction East



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) On the domestic front your children will do well in their examinations. This is a lucky week for businessmen and professionals. Artists and sportsmen will gain rare honours. This is the right time for lovers to execute marriage plans. However, your economic prospects look bleak. Push your efforts to the utmost and do not waste time.
Good dates 13, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers 2, 7 and 8
Favourable direction North



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen. Try your best and you will succeed in all your ventures. Friends and relatives will prove helpful. On the economic front some of you may gain money. Professionals and executives will be successful in their work. Jobs are in the offing for those unemployed.
Good dates 14, 15 and 17
Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction South east



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A hectic week lies ahead of you. Businessmen and professionals should be wary of enemies. The period is not favourable for lovers; avoid adventurous plans and do not take hasty decisions. However, the domestic front will provide you with all the inspiration to overcome this bleak period. A journey will relieve you of all tensions.
Good dates 12, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction North west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is the opportune time for lovers to get married. A member of the opposite sex will prove very helpful to those unmarried. New opportunities will come in the way of businessmen and professionals. On the financial front you may incur losses if you gamble or indulge in speculative ventures. Your children will be successful in competitions.
Good dates 15, 16 and 17
Lucky numbers 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction North



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Creative artists will find this period favourable. If you intend to get married this is the right time to do so. Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. However, your financial prospects look bleak. The domestic front will also bother you. Do not neglect your health and diet. Students will get opportunities to study abroad.
Good dates 11, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction East



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is a very lucky period for those in business or in service. You should not miss any opportunities that come your way. Creative people will make headway in their vocations. Relatives and friends will inspire you. A new friendship will prove beneficial. But a love affair is going to end. However, your financial prospects are bright.
Good dates 12, 16 and 17
Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction South



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Financially this is a favourable week. Speculators and gamblers may strike it rich. You must not venture out on your own at any cost, whether in business, research or in creative fields. You should stress more on team work. This is an ideal week for love and marriage. Travel is likely to take place during the weekend. Keep a sharp eye on your health.
Good dates 13, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 8
Favourable direction North east

For those born between 15 August to 14 September

You have a tendency to boss over your subordinates. You expect obedience and blind devotion from your juniors. However, you are extremely courteous and diplomatic with your superiors. Some of you are adventurous by nature and you do not hesitate to undertake risks. You like to maintain a luxurious lifestyle. You are extravagant in your tastes and like to receive costly gifts. Women born during this phase are extremely good-looking and they love to wear flashy clothes.

THIS INDIA



BELGAUM: The farmers of Katakol village in Ramdurg taluk took two donkeys out in a procession through the town on 21 July in the hope that it would bring rain. The "pair" was decorated and garlanded and many housewives washed the donkeys' hooves in the hope of appeasing Varuna, the rain god—*Indian Express* (P. Mohan Raj, Bangalore)

MADRAS: A staunch rationalist in Athur town in Salem district of Tamil Nadu celebrated his son's wedding turning age-old traditions and beliefs upside down. The main guests to the wedding on 18 July were about 500 widows who played a prominent role on the occasion. Dressed in colourful silk and polyester sarees and bedecked with jewels, they led the marriage procession from a cinema theatre to the accompaniment of funeral trumpets and beating of drums as thousands of people in the town watched the spectacle in utter disbelief. The wedding was performed at a rationalist conference ground in the presence of thousands of non-believers. The *muhurtham* was fixed during *Rahu Kalam*, believed to be the most inauspicious time. Two widows blessed the *mangalsutra* and gave it to the bridegroom, who tied it around the neck of the bride amidst the beating of drums and shouting of slogans such as "down with superstition" and "down with the humiliation of widows." The guests were then served the feast, the choice dish being mutton *biryani*, breaking yet another tradition—*Deccan Herald* (Prakash R., Bangalore)

PUNE: It was the challenge thrown by his one time girl friend on the tennis court in the city way back in the late Thirties that made the Maharashtra

Governor learn Marathi in six months. However, having lost touch with the language over the decades and finding himself once again in Pune, the Governor, Kona Prabhakara Rao, has engaged the services of a retired teacher to brush up his knowledge of Marathi during his monsoon camp here. His one-time girl friend is now an illustrious Marathi authoress, Shakuntala Paranjpye, whom he invited for tea recently. The two recalled this and many other incidents of their college days—*The Times of India* (Neelaratna Javeri, Bombay)

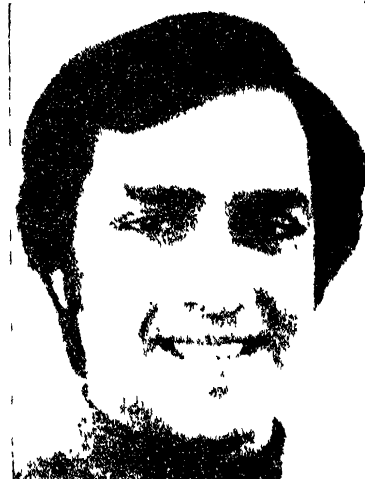
CALCUTTA: An indication of the speed in which the post and telegraph department works was available on 18 July. An urgent telegram sent on 17 July by the private secretary of the union finance minister, Mr V. P. Singh, from Delhi reached the chief commissioner of income tax, Mr S. P. Singh, in Calcutta late on the afternoon of 18 July, about the time when the union minister was already on his return journey to Delhi. The telegram, besides confirming the union minister's visit, also asked the chief commissioner of income tax to make necessary security arrangements in the Ayakar Bhavan. With telex lines at the Bhavan being down, the private secretary sent the telegram which was delivered at about 4.10 pm on 18 July—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (B. K. Salwan, 99 APO)

IMPHAL: A group of women "arrested" the officer-in-charge of Lamlai police station for allegedly consuming liquor and beating up people at the bazar, about 12 km from here on 20 July. The officer was, however, rescued by a police team led by a deputy superintendent late in the night. The women, carrying torches, are on a nightly prow for drunks to impose prohibition in the area—*Searchlight* (Minhajus Salam Rizvi, Goh, Bihar)

ALLAHABAD: For the first time in history the Allahabad High Court delivered two judgements in Sanskrit recently. Justice Banwari Lal Yadav was congratulated by members of the High Court Bar Association and the Bar Council of India on his delivering the judgements in Sanskrit. Replying to felicitations Justice Lal said it was his small contribution towards development and advancement of the ancient Indian language from which foreign countries like Germany and Russia had been greatly benefited as our ancient books written in Sanskrit contained advanced science and technology—*The Indian Nation* (Ramesh Sinha, Patna)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Lalit Maken was a young, dynamic and promising colleague, the type of MP we had been trying to encourage—Rajiv Gandhi, on the death of Lalit Maken



If you have the will power, you can do anything in Parliament—Lalit Maken, in an interview to *The Telegraph* seven days before he was murdered

Lalit Maken was midnight's child too, but lived on the other side of Rushdie's symbol, in the world of effort, not cynicism—M J. Akbar, in *The Telegraph*

You cannot find peace by building weapons, by building on violence. If you want peace, you have to build peace, you have to talk peace—Rajiv Gandhi, expressing his concern about the prospect of Pakistan building a nuclear bomb

We have not come to that stage of running the Akali Dal—Arjun Singh, on differences among the Akali leaders over the issue of the signing of the Rajiv-Longowal accord, in *The Hindustan Times*

Unless apartheid goes, we are for the birds—Bishop Desmond Tutu in *Newsweek*

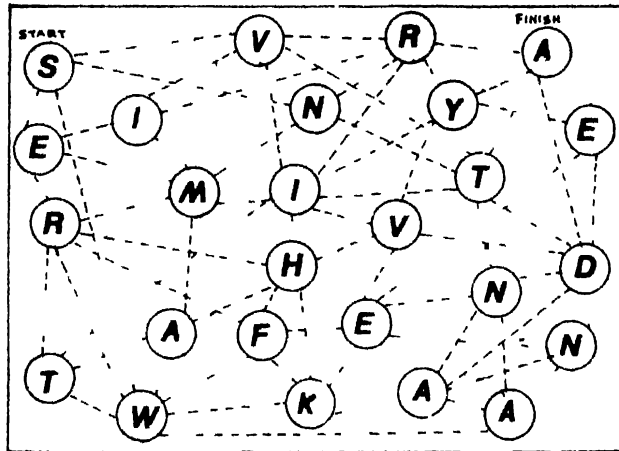
I'm still kind of floating. I don't know when I'll come down to earth—Sharon Christa McAuliffe, who was recently chosen to be the first teacher to voyage into space, in *Time*

I wasn't the greatest. I was a good talker...I never could hit hard—Mohammed Ali

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

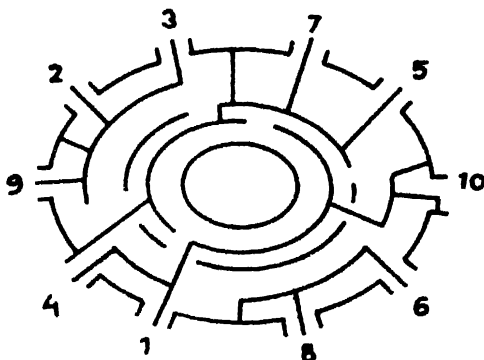
Personality Plus



The name of a famous person can be spelt out in the maze above by proceeding from the start and moving on to the adjacent letters, without backtracking. The clues given below may help. Can you name the person?

- 1 "If there is a religion, it would be in this book," he said of the Bible
- 2 He went forth, in the name of India, to Chicago, via Japan in 1893 to participate in the "Parliament of Religions"
- 3 When he asked Ramakrishna, his master, "Do you believe in God?" he was told, "I see him just as I see you here, only in a much more intense way"
- 4 He was born in Calcutta in 1862
- 5 His adopted name, translated into English, suggests "joy" and "discrimination"

Figure it Out



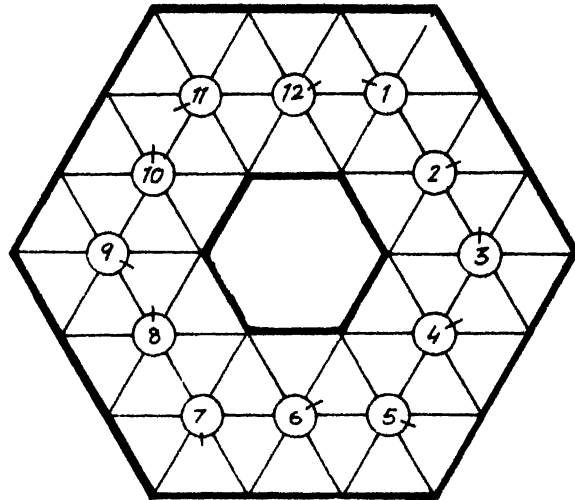
A maze of numbers! Get in and out of this maze and score the highest points you can.

You can enter anywhere you like. Then, wind your way to any other number of your choice, come out and then get in through the same number. Add this to your number for entry and carry on like this to score the maximum points till you finally get out. We got a score of 34.

Quick Think

Remove one letter from RIDICULOUS and jumble up the letters to form a word meaning 'ridiculous'.

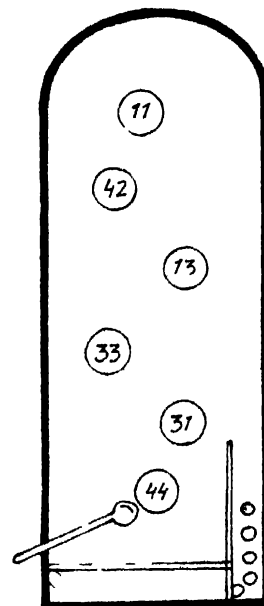
Word Play



This word maze will contain 12 words when completed, one letter per space, reading in either clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below.

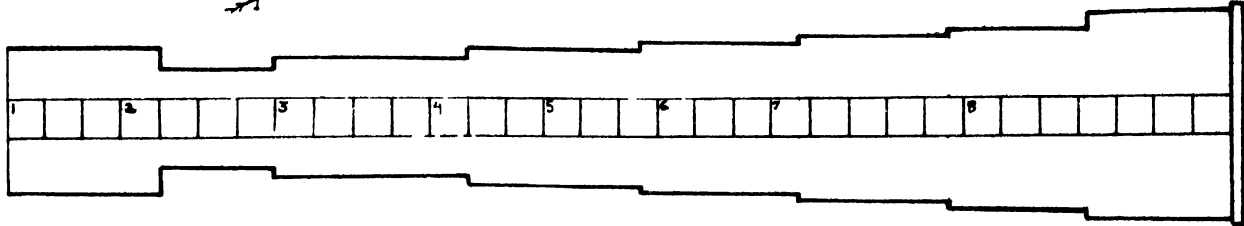
- 1 Does not sink
- 2 The sixth planet from the sun
- 3 Numeral
- 4 Reveal from a strobe tray
- 5 Wander around
- 6 Dislike intensely
- 7 Death
- 8 Caprice from throw him, svce
- 9 Why rot? Change and become honourable
- 10 Send out of the country
- 11 Obtain illegally
- 12 Foams

Mind Bender



A curious bagatelle! What numbers do you need to strike to get a score of exactly 100?

Word Power



The names of the eight objects shown above can be condensed into the 32 letterspaces in the telescope, by overlapping the last letters of one word with the first letters (one or more) of the next, and so on. For example, COBRA, BRAZEN and ENERGY can be telescoped into COBRAZENENERGY. First determine the names of the objects, and decide which words overlap. The illustrations are not in sequence.

(Hint: The last letter in the telescope is A.)

Blankagrams

The words below have *missing vowels*. With the help of the clues given, can you fill in the vowels, and find the correct words?

S—

RP—

CHHH—

TMTN—

R—

D—

B—

PR—

Q—

A continent

Another continent

A breed of dogs

A three-toed sloth

Robotic process

Frightening

Thought

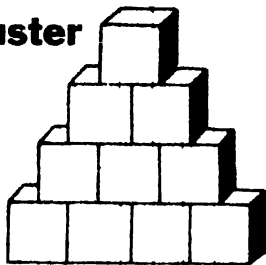
A musical instrument

A musical

A row

For example, if you fill in the vowels in the last word, you would get QUEUE.

Block Buster



A, E, C, E, L, O, P, R, S, T.

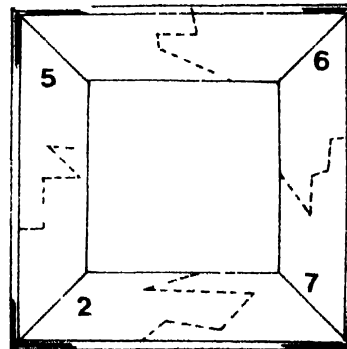
Fill in the letters given above into the squares of the blank pyramid so that these form eight four-letter words reading downwards.

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Blockbuster:



Figure it Out:

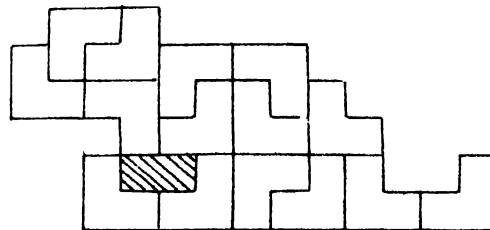


Word Wheel: 1 Autumn 2 Saturn 3 Titian 4 Inborn 5 Teston 6 Carton 7 Heaven 8 Indian 9 Napkin 10 Trepan 11 Intern 12 Mormon 13 Edison 14 Strain 15 Action 16 Vision 17 Eleven 18 Steven 19 Nation 20 Inspan 21 Nippon 22 Ensign

Quick Think: Incorrectly

Seeing Double: Numbers one and 14 are identical

Shape Sleuth.



Witsharpener: Vowels are worth 6 and consonants 8. The total are then multiplied together. Dolh and Patna have the same number of vowels and consonants, and so are the same distance. If you can spot this, it's a quick way of finding the answer.

VARIETY

CHESS

Although no longer king of the tournament circuit, Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen nevertheless retains a spark of originality and zest, hallmarks of a great player.

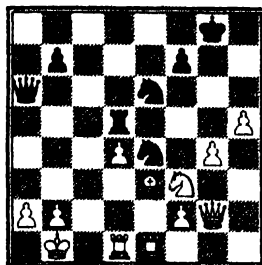
His talent has always been the ability to find abnormal moves in a normal strategic context, as in the following game. The Caro-Kann has been played for decades without Black's ninth move coming into consideration, but Larsen, like a great actor, can always read fresh life into old lines.

White L. Ljubojevic Black B. Larsen
Caro-Kann Defence Bugojno 1984

1 P-K4 P-QB3 2 P-Q4 P-Q4
3 N-Q2 PXP 4 NXP B-B4
5 N-N3 B-N3 6 P-KR4 P-KR3
7 N-B3 N-Q2 8 P-R5 B-R2
9 B-Q3 KN-B3!?

The exchange 9 BxB has always been automatic, but must one give White the tempo to develop his queen?

Larsen (Black) to move



Ljubojevic (White)

10 BxB NxB 11 Q-K2 P-K3
12 B-Q2 B-K2 13 O-O-O Q-N3
14 N-B5 PxN 15 KR-K1 O-O!
16 QxB N(Q2)-B3 17 Q-K5 Q-R3
18 K-N1 KR-Q1!

Typically fluent play, not grabbing the KRP, but concentrating instead on harmonising the build-up of his forces.

19 QxP R-Q4 20 Q-B4 N-B1
Still ignoring the KRP, preferring to reinforce the pressure against White's centre.

21 P-KN4 QR-Q1 22 Q-N3 P-B4!
23 P-B3
If 23 PxP Q-B5 threatening N-K5 with terrible pressure on the Q file.

23 N-K5! 24 Q-N2 PxB
25 PxP N-K3 26 B-K3

DIAGRAM

26 N-B5+! 27 PxN R-N4+
28 Resigns
If 28 K-R1 Q-R6! or 28 K-B2 QxP+ 29 K-Q3 N-B4 mate.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

It is always mildly amusing (for some) when a good player is defeated on a hand which an average player would find straightforward. When the following deal occurred in a pairs contest all the rabbits made an overtrick while the 'pros' were going down like ninepins - or is it ten-pins nowadays?

Dealer South N-S vulnerable

♠ 10 8 4	♥ A 9 3	♦ A 9 3	♣ A 9 3
♠ 10 6 4 3	♥ A 5	♦ 5 3 2	♣ A J 8 4 3
♠ 10	♥ 5 3 2	♦ A J 8 4 3	♣ Q 7
♠ K 9 7 5 2	♥ K J 6 5 2	♦ Q 7	♣ 8 7 2
	♥ K Q J 9	♦ Q 9 8 7 6 4	♣ Q 10
	♥ A K J	♦ Q 10	
	♥ 6		

The bidding was usually on these lines

South	West	North	East
1♠	No	2♣	No
2♥	No	4♣	No
6♣	No	No	No

In some cases South rebid 3NT over Two Clubs and North was then worth a jump to Five Spades.

When the singleton diamond was led against Six Spades, simple players led a spade to the ace and returned a spade, making thirteen tricks when the queen

appeared. Some of the more knowledgeable ones, however, recognised one of the standard safety plays. They led the king of spades from hand, then finessed the 9. This line keeps the trump losers to one whether West or East holds Q 10 x x.

On this occasion the play turned out to be a case of a little learning being a dangerous thing. East won the second spade with the queen and gave his partner a diamond ruff.

In a team event a declarer who suffered this fate might consider himself unlucky. In pairs the play is doubtful. The slam is likely to be reached at most tables, so there is no good case for a safety play that is more likely to cost a trick than to save one.

TERENCE REFSE

QUIZ

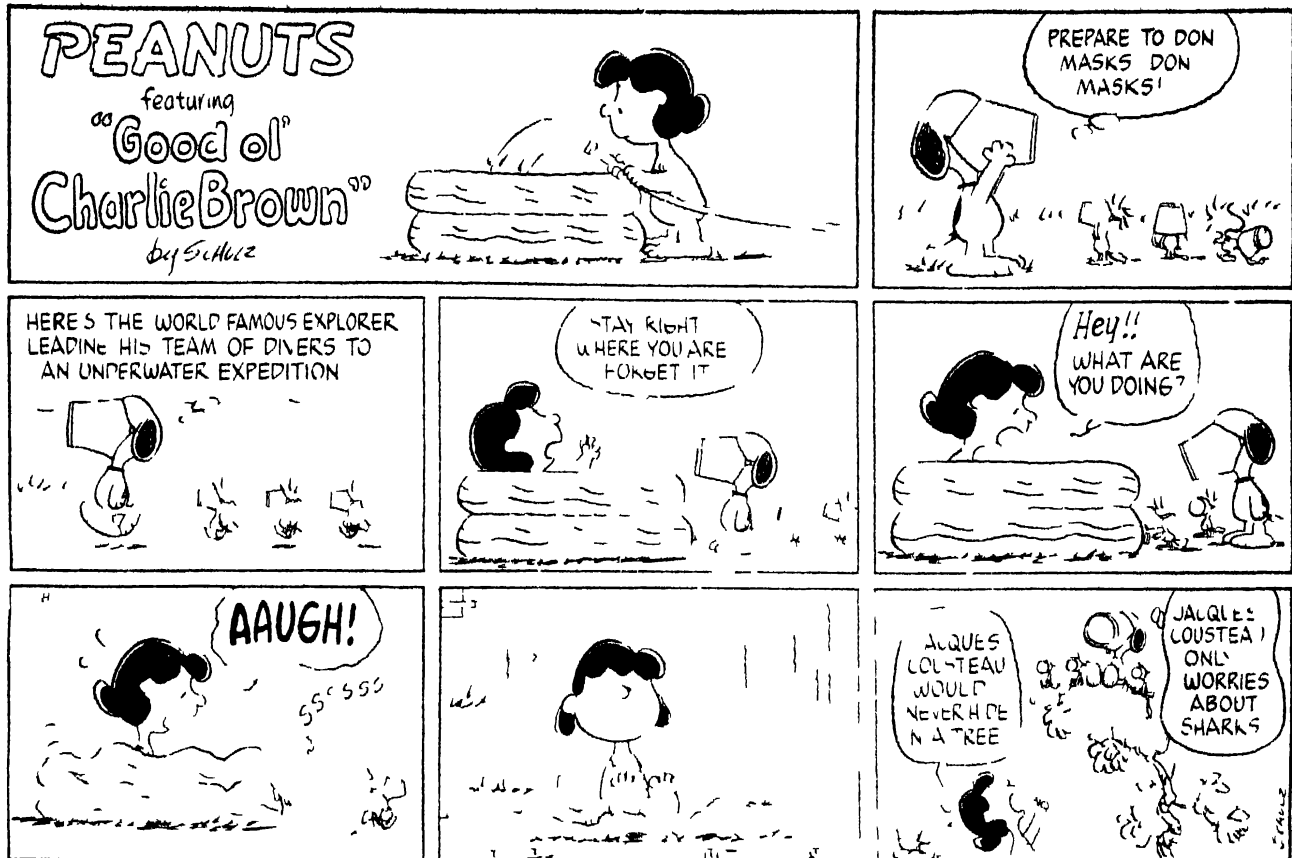
QUESTIONS

- What do the initials IFAD stand for?
- In Tibet it is called the Tsangpo what is it called in India?
- The longest speech made in the United Nations was of four hours and 29 minutes on 26 September 1960. By whom?
- Dave Gilmour, Roger Waters, Rick Wright and Nick Mason belong to which well-known rock group?
- Name the first Indian woman to be made an ambassador.
- Which outdoor sport was originally known as sphainstike?
- Which Pope reigned for the longest period of time?
- In Indian mythology name the goddess of dawn who led the chariot of the Sun goddess across the heavens.

- Which is the world's commonest language?
- Where in India was the first nuclear power plant built?
- How is a molluscan consecration better known as?
- What do the following have in common: A.M. Engineer, O.P. Mehra, H. Mulgaonkar and Arjan?
- What is periodontitis?
- In which city in the world is La Guardia airport?
- Which Australian test cricketer is known as "Dutchy"?
- Cattle Queen of Montana*, *The Badman*, *Stallion Road* and *She's working her way through college* are films starring an actor who has achieved fame in another profession. Name him.
- Who is the Indian national billiards champion?

- 17 Geet Sethi
- 16 Ronald Reagan
- 15 Bob Holland
- 14 New York
- 13 The inflammation of the jaw
- 12 They all served as chiefs of the Indian Air Force
- 11 A pearl
- 10 Tarapur
- 9 Mandarin or Northern Chinese
- 8 Usha
- 7 Plus 1X for nearly 32 years
- 6 Lawn tennis
- 5 Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit
- 4 Pink Floyd
- 3 Fidel Castro
- 2 The Brahmaputra
- 1 International Fund for Agricultural Development

ANSWERS



VAT 15/244

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रत्ना
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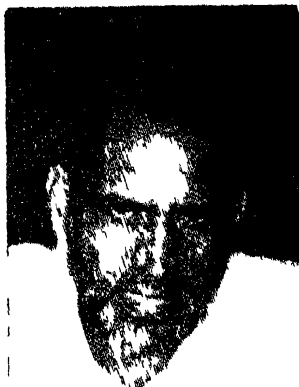
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Disunity in the Janata



George Fernandes



Chandra Shekhar

What's happening in the Janata Party? Of late, there seems to be no cohesion among the top leaders. Recently general secretary George Fernandes told newsmen in New Delhi that the party would oppose any move by the government to bring about a national consensus on the controversial reservation issue. The very same day party president Chandra Shekhar was telling newsmen in Faizabad that he favoured a national policy on the issue. It has become difficult to guess when George Fernandes is speaking for

himself and when he is acting as the spokesman of the party. Sometime back he told newsmen that he was in favour of the opposition boycotting all meetings convened by the Prime Minister in protest against the latter's remarks on the Emergency. Fernandes followed this up by issuing letters to all opposition parties suggesting the boycott. However, while other opposition parties took no notice of his appeal, his own party's floor leader in Parliament, Madhu Dandavate, has been meeting the Prime Minister time and again.

Dished Out

Even with all the talks of America's technological superiority in the field of communication, Russia has stolen a march over it. This came to light when a team of Doordarshan crew, presumably to cut costs, went with their VCRs to the United States information agency in New Delhi looking for dish like antennas which can transfer signals into visual images. The idea was to cover Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's tour of the USA sitting in New Delhi by receiving signals

transmitted from the USA through the dish. When the US authorities told them that they did not have the dish antennas they were looking for, the Doordarshan team was surprised. But the Russians have such an antenna. And indeed, Doordarshan covered Soviet President Chernenko's funeral by plugging on their VCRs to the dish the Russian information service had so thoughtfully provided them in New Delhi. And if Russians have the dish can Americans be far behind?

Helpless about the Homeless

Those who have made pavements their homes exist in the midst of filth and squalor which has to be seen to be believed. Rabid dogs in search of stinking meat and cats in search of hungry rats keep their company. They cook and sleep where they ease themselves, for no conveniences are available to them. Their daughters come of age, bathe under the gaze of passers by, unmindful of the feminine bashfulness. The cooking and washing over, the women pick lice from each other's hair. The boys beg Menfolk, without occupation, snatch chains with the connivance of the defenders of law and order.

When caught, if at all, they say "Who does not commit crimes in this city?" Pious, passionate words of a Supreme Court judgment on the fate of the lakhs of pavement dwellers of Bombay. But if these words cry out for the poor, the judgment did not go in their favour. It spoke with Dickensian fervour for those who live without a roof above them and its judgment still went against the Oliver Twists. Bound helplessly by antiquated municipal laws of the great metropolis, the Supreme Court ruled that these pavement dwellers be evicted from their dwellings by 31 October. Even the Supreme Court is helpless for the homeless.

No Contradiction, No Correction

A Hindi daily of the capital recently published an article on how the hardcore Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) faction of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was embarrassing party president Atal Behari Vajpayee and making it impossible for him to stay on as the party chief. A day after the news item appeared Lal Krishna Advani, general secretary of the BJP, called up the editor of the paper and told him that he had published something very damaging for the party image. He was at pains to clarify that there were "absolutely no" divisions in the party. After Advani had finished his monologue on the unity of the party the editor quietly asked him whether he himself had not been "leaking" such things to the press. Advani kept quiet for some time and then said that the news item had made his situation in the party "very weak" and that Atal Be-



Lal Krishna Advani

hari Vajpayee himself had asked him for an explanation. In that event, replied the editor, why don't you issue an official contradiction? Send it to our office and we shall be glad to publish it. At this suggestion, Advani suddenly recoiled. "No, no," he said, "We cannot do that. Such things are not done at the official level."

D.E. Nizamuddin



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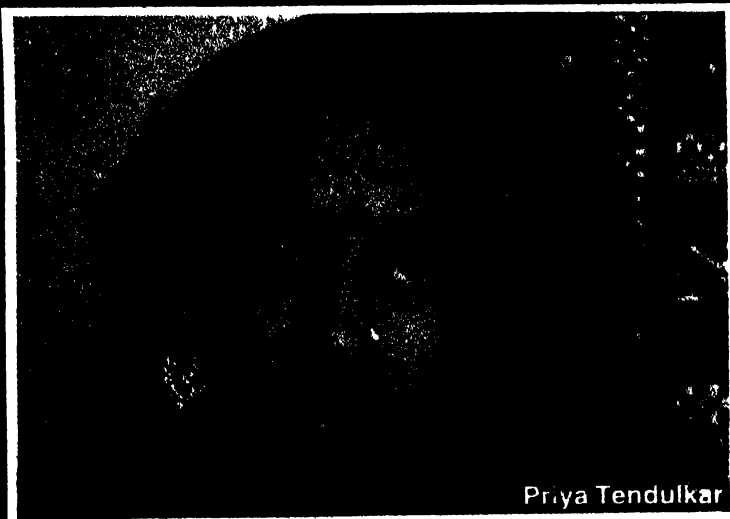
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SUNDAY



The Mafia of Delhi



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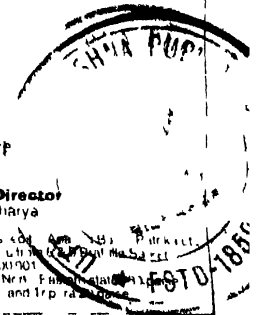
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Cover transparency of Lalit Maken by Sondeep Shankar and of Priya Tendulkar by Animish Thaker



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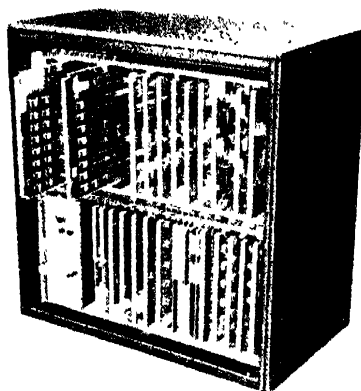


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Dear Madam/Sir

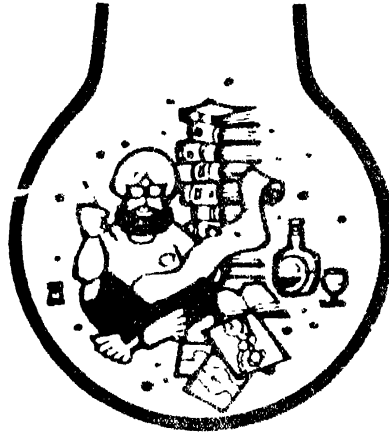
In future the order is to be reversed. The opening formula for letters; "Dear Sir or Madam" should hereafter read, "Dear Madam or Sir or whatever the case may be," otherwise you may be exposed to the charge of being anti-feminist. So the Equal Opportunities Committee of London's Hackney Council has opined. It warns men to be more careful in their choice of words pertaining to females of their species. Before putting pen to paper they should ask themselves "Are women being excluded, trivialised, patronised, stereotyped or made fun of?" Examples of words which when converted to the feminine gender might offend feminine susceptibilities are appended: dustman must not be dustwoman but a "refuse operative;" foreman not a forewoman but "supervisor;" housewife, "consumer shopper." Similar verbal reforms are proposed for disabled persons: a sightless person must not be called blind but "visually handicapped;" and if he or she is one-eyed, as "suffering from partially visual handicap."

In Shakespeare's time a cobbler had been elevated to the status of "a surgeon unto men's shoes." In my time I have known a cook designated "canteen officer," *dhobi* a "launderer," and a sweeper a "garbage remover." How does change in the nomenclature change the drudgery of the occupation or assuage the feelings of the deprived?

Scenes Behind the Accord

I have had the good fortune of learning something about the way the Punjab accord was reached. It throws new light on the painstaking methods adopted to keep the discussions secret till all points of dispute had been resolved. And the enormous stamina for work that the once lackadaisical airlines pilot has acquired since he became a politician and a Prime Minister.

Negotiations were reopened as soon as the Akali leaders had been let out of jail. Some were understandably bitter after having been kept in detention for eleven months and remained adamant. A few felt that they should overcome their anger and give the new Prime Minister who had put Punjab on the top of his list of priorities a chance to resolve the problem. In the first lot were Tohra and Badal; in the second, Longowal, Balwant Singh and Barnala.



Governor Arjun Singh who played a decisive role in those negotiations rightly decided to bring the Longowal-Balwant Barnala group into contact with the Prime Minister and his advisers. A government plane flew them in from Chandigarh to Delhi and back to Chandigarh several times. This was inevitably done at night when press hounds were not on the prowl, but I was drinking in the Press Club or fast asleep. Nevertheless, news often leaked out and people from whom trouble could be expected proved troublesome. Akali negotiators suggested that the Prime Minister meet them without his cabinet sub-committee, with only Governor Arjun Singh present. This delicate task was performed with some finesse which I cannot divulge. The final meeting went on from midnight to 5 am. At this meeting Bhajan Lal was summoned. When told of the proposed transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, de-linking it from the future of Fazilka and Abohar, the Haryana chief minister became melodramatic. He tore open his shirt, bared his chest, and proclaimed "In that case shoot me dead." Rajiv asked one of his aides to take Bhajan Lal to the next room and let him cool off. Two hours later he was asked to come in again. By then his homicidal instinct had abated. He readily agreed to the accord. What happened to him during those two hours I can only guess.

The Prime Minister spent most of the following day settling points of minor detail as was him in Parliament later in the evening. He could not have slept more than a few minutes in the preceding 24 hours. He looked as fresh as the proverbial daisy.

Thanedar Sahib Bulatey Hain

A large number of citizens have come to me and complained against the way they are harassed by the police. In some instances police

men knocked on their doors late at night and simply said, "Thanedar Sahib nay aap ko police station talab kya hai (you are required at the police station)." Those who went, spent the night at the station. Many had to buy their way out of further harassment. Those who refused to go, were threatened with dire consequences. And when they complied with the order the next day, they were kept waiting for hours, asked the most inane questions and before being let off warned that they may be summoned again. One experience of this kind is enough to turn any law-abiding citizen into a rebel. Don't the police realise their responsibility in creating animosity against the administration?

The law on the subject is quite clear. No Thanedar Sahib has the power to demand the presence of anyone at the police station without communication. If a citizen does through a writ, he gets a warrant. A citizen is entitled to go to bed, to go to work, to obey the summons of the police, but must insist that he will not answer questions unless he is asked to present himself in person. The few individuals who have the courage to face the police I am afraid that not even policemen have the guts to face them who stand up to their bullying tactics. This is one field where the press could play a positive role by publishing instances of arbitrary misuse of power by the police and instilling confidence in the citizens that they can say "no" to the clouty Thanedar.

Aviation Fuel

Not to be outdone by Rakesh Sharma and Bharat Mishra, two sturdy Punjabis, applied to the NASA, the American space agency to be taken to outer space. Their applications were accepted and they were asked to report at the centre in California. They were told that during their period of training they must not take any alcohol. They followed the strict regimen imposed on them for several months. One day they could not resist the temptation to wet their pipes and the only drink was available anywhere in the vicinity, they drank up a canister of rocket fuel. Next morning the following dialogue took place between them.

"This is your friend speaking. Have you been to the lavatory this morning?"

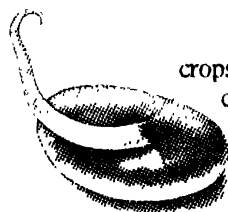
"No, yaar, why do you ask such a silly question?"

"If you haven't, don't try. I am speaking from Tokyo."

(Contributed by Tushar Kumar)



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Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

The United Nations, Kabul and Islamabad are to begin discussions on the four "instruments" of the draft agreement on Afghanistan at the end of August. One of the main issues of the talks will be safeguarding Afghanistan against outside interference. Though the Soviet Union is itself an "outsider," inexorably involved in the country's internal affairs, it is taking a keen interest in the outcome of these discussions. There seems to be only one apparent reason for the Russians' concern: the arming of the *mujahideens* with new US weapons has taken a heavy toll on their military forces stationed in Afghanistan.

The second clause of the agreement will discuss the details of a UN armed force that is to be drawn from different countries and stationed on the country's borders to ensure that Pakistan and Iran do not encroach upon its frontiers. Teheran has refused to participate in the negotiations, and this raises doubts about the validity of any settlement that may be reached.

Another issue which the talks hope to tackle is the repatriation of refugees who had fled to Iran and Pakistan, after the Soviet invasion. The agreement envisages the creation of the right atmosphere in Afghanistan, so that the three million Afghan refugees, most of whom are taking shelter in Pakistan, can safely return to their homeland with dignity. (Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had used the word "honour" in his address to the US Congress.)

The final instrument of the agreement will deal with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. While Pakistan attaches the utmost importance to this issue, and wants it to be taken up first during the talks, the Soviet Union has said that only if an agreement is reached on the other three issues, will it be ready to pursue the matter.

The UN is strangely silent about the agreement. However, the UN headquarters in New York are rife with speculation. Most of the people I spoke to ruled out the possibility of a settlement. They were of the opinion that the Soviet Union would not quit Afghanistan unless it is assured that the proposed safeguards are foolproof. Moreover, Washington, too, is not very keen about the withdrawal of the Soviets. The USA's anti-USSR propaganda has proved beneficial enough for it.

That a political solution is the only way out of this problem, has been accepted by all, including the Soviet Union and Pakistan. At a meeting held in Geneva to discuss the problem, Pakistan had proposed that China

be included in the talks. Afghanistan's response to this was a counter proposal to include India. Islamabad promptly dropped its proposal, as India's participation in the negotiations was the last thing it wanted. But it appears that notwithstanding Pakistan's stand, New Delhi may still take the initiative to solve the Afghanistan problem. This is the impression US officials got from Rajiv Gandhi's recent statements in Washington. According to a top state department official, "India is now prepared to stake its reputation and risk sully of its hands, which was not the case during Mrs. Gandhi's regime." During his recent trip to the US, Rajiv Gandhi had made some remarks about his talks with President Gorbachev in Moscow. He said that the USSR wanted to come to a political settlement in Afghanistan. This was an indication that the two heads of state had discussed the issue between themselves.

While the UN secretary general is trying to persuade Pakistan to consider a settlement, the US is worried about the strident voices being raised in Pakistan exhorting Zia ul Haq to negotiate directly with Kabul. However, Shahabzade Yakub Khan, Pakistan's foreign minister seems to have allayed USA's fears when he visited that country recently. As one state department official commented, "They (the Pakistanis) can manage their National Assembly but the *mujahideens* can turn their guns against Pakistan if it betrays them." America also seems to have stopped accusing the Soviet Union for casting an evil eye on Baluchistan. It is now argued that since the Soviets have given up the idea of an independent greater Baluchistan, it is now up to the communists within Baluchistan to work for a truly federal Pakistan.

Whether the UN or New Delhi will ultimately succeed in their efforts to help Afghanistan reach a settlement is still uncertain. The total and sincere commitment of the two superpowers is the most essential ingredient for any workable settlement. Salig Harrison, an expert in Afghanistan, has blamed the US for pressuring Pakistan to go back on its acceptance of the UN's earlier proposals. He also thinks that the US is not interested in a settlement. Mr Harrison feels that there will be more bloodshed in Afghanistan especially as the US has decided to "upgrade" its assistance to the *mujahideens*. This will in turn lead to "greater intervention" by the Soviet Union, which has already sent more than 15 lakh armed personnel to Afghanistan, he says. The prospects of peace returning to this troubled land seem to be bleak.

Most of the people (in the UN headquarters) I spoke to ... were of the opinion that the Soviet Union would not quit Afghanistan unless it was assured that the safeguards were foolproof. Moreover, Washington, too, is not very keen on a Soviet withdrawal. Its anti-USSR propaganda has proved beneficial enough for the USA.

Scars of Bhopal

The pathetic plight of the mothers and babies of Bhopal has left me stunned (*The Babies of Bhopal*, 28 July—3 August). It is unfortunate that the Union Carbide Corporation is doing precious little for the victims of the MIC tragedy. The Indian authorities too are indifferent. Instead of just suing Union Carbide, the government should extend all possible medical help to the hapless mothers and babies of Bhopal.

A K Pandey, Arrah

• I was disturbed to learn the hapless condition of the mothers of Bhopal. The victims of the gas tragedy can never be compensated. The nightmare in Bhopal will continue for years to come.

M Devadoss, Madurai

• Ritu Sarin's article on the aftermath of the Bhopal tragedy brought tears to my eyes. The disaster continues to take its toll. The plight of the victims have been compounded by the scant medical attention provided to them. The government and the Union Carbide authorities must go out of its way to help the people of Bhopal.

Sanjay Chopra, Hoshiarpur

• The cover story was touching. There are many more killer gas plants operating in the country. The government should take emergency steps against them.

P Lala, Akra (West Bengal)

• For the victims of the MIC tragedy, the worst is not yet over. As rightly pointed out by Ms Sarin, the effects of the disaster will be felt for many more generations to come.

Bijoy Dutta, Jalpaiguri

Dishonest Politicians

The report *Congress(I) MP in Bank Fraud* (14—20 July) was not at all surprising. Now a days, politicians are only interested in making money. Most of them are involved in various kinds of corrupt practices like land scandals or bank forgeries.

K Gopalan, Kolar Gold Fields (Karnataka)

• The fraudulent activities of the Congress(I) MP brings to my mind the famous Hindi saying, a single dirty fish destroys the beauty of a pond. A few corrupt persons are destroying the reputation of the Congress(I).

Salim Anis, Aligarh



Tension at the Top

The special report on Presidents and Prime Ministers *A History of their Tensions* (14—20 July) was revealing but shocking. It was really unfortunate to learn that the two power centres should be involved in petty quarrels when the country is going through troubled times.

Shailaja Rao, Calcutta

• In a family where the husband and the wife do not have good relations, the children are bound to suffer. How can we expect our country to remain peaceful when the two constitutional heads of the country have fallen out over each other? Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has violated the Constitution by not discussing affairs of vital interest with the President. Rajiv Gandhi should follow the tradition set by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi; they never ignored the President even if they had personal differences with the highest authority in the land.

S C Malakar, Agra

• I appreciated Rajiv Gandhi's efforts of doing away with conventions but the tradition of the Prime Minister meeting the President at regular intervals was a healthy one. The confrontation between the President and the PM is purely on a personal level and the sooner the misunderstanding ends the better it is for the people of the country.

M H Rama, Bhubaneswar

• The tension between Rajiv Gandhi and Zail Singh is not unusual. Jawaharlal Nehru differed with Ra-

jendra Prasad on many occasions and Indira Gandhi was not on good terms with V V Giri. However such tensions are never good for the country and efforts should be made to patch up the differences between Rajiv Gandhi and Zail Singh.

Rajesh Sahay, Jhumri Telaiya (Bihar)

• The Constitution bestows nominal powers on the President; all authority lies in the hands of the Prime Minister. Only a person with a commanding personality can influence a Prime Minister.

Pramod Sahoo, Chirimiri (Madhya Pradesh)

• President Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi should patch up their differences in the interest of the country. If the heads of the nation quarrel between themselves, foreign powers will get an opportunity to endanger the unity and integrity of the country.

Lalbabu Vishwakarma, Jamalpur

• The article was in bad taste. Personal problems should not be made public.

K J Joseph, Shillong

Bullying the Press

Kuldip Nayar's *Disciplining the Press* (29 July—3 August) was thought-provoking. The Tamil Nadu government has taken a step in the wrong direction by trying to curb the freedom of the press. People who elect their representatives have a right to know what transpires in the Assemblies. I appeal to the Tamil Nadu government not to meddle with the press.

M V Ravindran, Ahmedabad

• Kuldip Nayar has raised an issue of vital concern, which seems to be spreading among our rulers at an alarming pace. Whichever party is in power has the habit of bullying the press. It is time a legislation is enacted to protect the rights and freedom of the press. In a democracy, the government cannot interfere with the people's right to know.

B V Joshi, Pune

• As rightly pointed out by Mr Nayar, the people have the right to know how their elected representatives behave in the Assemblies and in Parliament. If a reporter faithfully reports on the proceedings of the House, the government has no business to pull him up for breach of privilege.

Rajesh Gupta, Ahmedabad

Ban the Bottle

Big Business Versus Breast Feeding (14—20 July) highlighted a problem which has assumed grave proportions. The Infant Nutrition Information Service has only touched the tip of the iceberg: the problem is much deeper and serious which needs to be fought on a war footing. All advertisements of tinned milk and baby food should be banned by law since they exploit the ignorance of Indian mothers by exhibiting healthy babies in the ads. Tinned milk is malnutritious as a result of which babies develop diseases such as diarrhoea, marasmus and in certain cases they even die. A small group of concerned people in Switzerland published a tract against Nestle, the chief manufacturers of baby foods. But in India such a concern is still a far cry.

The unhygienic use of feeding bottles also endangers the life of an infant. In India, a lot of babies die every year since mothers do not know how to use a feeding bottle properly. The manufacturers too take little effort to educate the mothers. The absence of a nipple



Breastfeeding is a simple and cheap technique which can save the lives of millions of children each year

cover in most bottles available in the market can play havoc with the babies.

J. N. Vegad, Jamshedpur

Manipulating Loans

How Corrupt is Bhajan Lal? (21-27 July) analysed the mess in Haryana under the chief ministership of Bhajan Lal. The article boldly details the corrupt practices of the CM's family who have been getting loans from the state-owned HSFC and also from the IDBI for expanding their industrial empire. The HSFC and the IDBI had sanctioned loans indiscriminately to innumerable industries owned by the Bishnois without verifying the authenticity of the documents. The Prime Minister should immediately order a judicial enquiry into the matter.

K. Ravichandran, Ahmedabad

• It is a popular belief that honesty is the key to success. But after going through the article, I felt that it was not honesty but dishonesty which enabled a man to rise in life. From time to time we have been promised a clean government, but how can we have one as long as there are chief ministers like Bhajan Lal?

Param Hans Singh, Arrah

An Undesirable Colonial Legacy

The victor-vanquished attitude A.S. Angami complains of in *Understanding Nagas* (Opinion, 21—27 July) is not the slant to my story, *The Border War*. If Mr Angami goes through the proceedings of the last session of the Nagaland Assembly, and I am sure he has, he will bear out the truth of what he complains about. When the Nagaland chief minister S.C. Jamir was in Guwahati last month, this attitude was reflected in his conversation with me. The chief minister, when asked about the performance of the Nagaland armed police, replied: "A handful of brave Naga youths have been able to repulse the designs of the Assam police who greatly outnumbered our boys."

Nagas have always been known as brave warriors and the fact remains that the Assam police received a goon-dribbling at their hands; this is acknowledged by everyone including the people of Assam and Nagaland, and there is no need to feel apologetic about it.

However, when Mr Angami writes about the unnecessary charges on which five student leaders of the NSF were implicated and arrested by the Assam police, he is wide off the mark. The charges include case No. 312/85, under section 120(B)/120(A)/

124(A) of the IPC for conspiracy and waging war against the state.

Papers found in their possession include some with the markings of "Sovereign Republic of Nagaland" and a letter written from the organisation in Copenhagen, international work group for indigenous affairs, lending support to the Naga cause in their struggle against the government of India. Sedition and conspiracy may appear as "unnecessary charges" to Mr Angami, but I am sure few would agree with him.

He mentions the manhandling of a sub-divisional magistrate in 1977, subsequently leading to the loss of two lives. I take his words for it, but he forgets to mention the midnight massacre of 50 civilians in Chunnajan including women and children in January 1979 by attackers from the Naga side of the border. I fully agree

Ashwini Minna, the author of *A New Dawn in Punjab* (4—10 August) is the Resident Editor of *Punjab Kesari* in Delhi. After the assassination of his grandfather, Lala Jagat Narain and father, Romesh Chander, the *Hind Samachar* group of newspapers is headed by his uncle, Vijay Kumar—Editor

with Mr Angami that such sensitive issues must be shown in a historical perspective so as to project the correct nature of the problem. He is also right in talking about the undesirable colonial legacy left behind by the British, but whereas he feels that only the Nagas and tribals suffered because of this I beg to differ. Our entire nation is still suffering from this colonial legacy. It is just the Nagas who have lost part of their land for the administrative convenience of the foreign rulers. In 1913 a portion of the Dimapur mauza, originally the seat of the Kachari kingdom and administered till then as part of Sibsagar district, was transferred to the Naga Hills district by the British to provide the local administration with the Dimapur railroad. This was done despite strong public resentment among the plainsmen. It may be recalled that the Sunderan Commission has also awarded Dimapur to be transferred to Assam. However, despite the sanction of the Sunderan report, the Assam government has never tried to wrest back Dimapur, simply because since 1913, it has always been part of the Naga Hills district of Assam which today forms Nagaland state.

Seema Guha, Guwahati

COVER STORY

The Mafia of Delhi

Was Lalit Maken slain by Punjab extremists or was it an act of a local Mafia?

Lal Singh, the elusive terrorist trained in the Camper school in the USA, has been identified by the Delhi police as the possible assassin of the young Congress(I) MP from south Delhi, Lalit Maken, his wife Gitanjali and Bal-krishna Khanna. The announcement was made by the police on 7 August, a week after the gruesome murders. Whether Lal Singh, who is wanted by the United States of America's Federal Bureau of Investigation (along with the other Camper-trained killer, Ammand Singh) for his involvement in the plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi during the Prime Minister's US visit, will be nabbed by the police is an open question. By pinpointing Lal Singh, the police have shown that the Punjab extremists have not given up their belliger-

ence despite the Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal accord, which was signed on 24 July, a week before the young couple was gunned down in their Kirti Nagar residence in Delhi. Apparently, on 7 August, a fortnight after the accord, the threat of the Punjab terrorists loomed large over Delhi. While Lal Singh was being named as the possible assassin, the much-publicised National Security Guard (NSG), the elite force which had so far made more appearances in the parliamentary proceedings (when governmental assurances about the force being raised were given) than on the streets of the country, suddenly appeared on the streets of the capital's special security district. North Avenue and South Avenue, the roads which flank the Rashtrapati Bhavan and on which

flats of the MPs who do not get palatial bungalows are located, were suddenly bristling with black dungaree-clad commandos of the NSG. The casualty ward of the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, which is situated just off the North Avenue, was suddenly flooded with the NSG commandos that morning. Had a VIP been assaulted? The doctors on duty wondered. Nothing of that sort fortunately had happened. The chief of the commandos saw a Member of Parliament take a walk from his residence to the hospital and decided to follow him. Once in the hospital, he decided to familiarise his men with the VIP hospital's surroundings. With automatic-weapon toting commandos having taken charge of the streets of the VIP areas of the capital, the city seemed to be under a



Lalit Maken's daughter Avantika bids goodbye to her mother Gitanjali: who killed the parents of the child, who turned six on 10 August?



Sandeep Shrivastava

Smoke billows from Connaught Place shops during the November riots when the mafia flexed its muscles

siege of sorts. Was it the siege of the terrorists? Or was a local political Mafia building up a base in Delhi?

After Indira Gandhi's assassination, the capital was under the siege of this Mafia. The early November riots were engineered by this Mafia. Having tasted blood once, the Mafia flexed its muscles again on 31 July. After Lalit Maken's murder, the situation in the capital became so tense that the civil administration had to ask the army to stand by. For the second time in nine months the army was alerted for the maintenance of law and order in the national capital. Treating the army area commander's office like a local *thana* may be a fashionable thought, but in a democracy like India, having the army out on the streets of the capital too often may not be prudent. The very fact that the extreme step of alerting the army had to be taken after Maken's assassination shows the magnitude of the threat held out by the political Mafia in Delhi. The underworld in each city enjoys political patronage of sorts. Delhi being the national capital, the patronage is of a different degree. Was it possible that some politicians who are feeling

uncomfortable after the Punjab accord, because it may bring in its wake the ostracisation of the names which are linked with the anti-Sikh riots of November, decided to use the Mafia to send a warning signal? Maken had trod on many seasoned political toes in the last five years when he had shot up in Delhi's politics. By murdering him, a pressure group in Delhi's politics has been eliminated. His wife, Gitanjali, a former president of the National Students' Union of India and daughter of veteran politician Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma (the Governor of Andhra Pradesh) could have stepped into Maken's shoes and continued the work of her husband's group in Delhi politics. With her murder, this possibility too was eliminated. May be the Punjab extremists, and that too Lal Singh, decided to strike terror in Delhi by murdering Lalit Maken. But can it be ruled out that he had been slain by people whose interests were hurt by his powerful presence in politics and trade unions? More than the terrorists, the political Mafia should be dreaded in Delhi. For it is the same Mafia which has brought out the dungaree-clad commandos on the streets of the capital.

Lalit Maken's murder was carried out in broad daylight. It needed a lot of daring and planning. Nobody could deny that it was a job neatly done by rank professionals. Who could have done it? Where a man like Lalit Maken was concerned—who was not only reported to be on the hit-list of the Punjab extremists, but who was also a firebrand youth leader of Delhi storming and destroying many an established bastion in the capital—the possibilities could be many. This was made clear even at the press conference of the Delhi police commissioner, Ved Marwah, later on the day of the assassination. According to him, the crime branch of the Delhi police, to whom the investigation of the case had been handed over, was enquiring along three independent lines of investigation. While the extremist angle was the obvious one, it was widely believed that the other possibilities the police were looking into were: whether any trade union rivalries could have led to the killing of Maken and whether political rivalries within the Congress(I) could have resulted in the ghastly crime. The very fact that the police had, instead of immediately taking the most obvious course, launched a

COVER STORY



Blood stains on the spot where Maken fell to assassins' bullets

three-pronged probe indicated that the reasons for the Maken murder could be many.

In the days that followed, the police gradually "narrowed down" the investigations to the "terrorist angle" and on 7 August, they finally flashed photographs of Lal Singh, a Sikh terrorist who has the dubious distinction of being named as prime suspect in every major "plot" that has concerned India recently. Lal Singh is suspected to have been involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during his US trip earlier this year. Lal Singh, along with Ammand Singh, was again talked about as the man behind the tragic crash of the Air India jumbo Emperor Kanishka over the high seas off the Irish coast. Curiously enough, it was again Lal Singh's name that was flaunted about when suitcases containing explosives were discovered at Tokyo's Narita airport just around the time disaster struck the Air India jumbo. Lal Singh must be quite a jet-set international marksman. If the Delhi police are to be believed, it was Lal Singh who struck Maken in Kirti Nagar on 31 July. What has led the police to believe that a well-trained terrorist was behind Maken's murder is the professional way in

which the entire operation was conducted. According to one police officer involved in the investigations, the killing was the work of a "highly professional killer mentally trained for a cold-blooded murder." Further, the fact that sophisticated, semi-automatic weapons were used went in favour of the terrorist thesis. The general opinion was that such a well-planned operation could only have been undertaken by a well-knit professional group. However, in political circles of the capital, there was active speculation about the other two angles that the Delhi police were initially considering. Some sections ruled out these two options on the grounds that nobody other than extremists could have set into action such a professional operation adding that the weapons used in the killing indicated the possibility of extremist involvement. Indeed, one police officer tried to rule out the other two lines of investigation only on the basis that sophisticated weapons were used in the attack. But does not Delhi, with its flourishing underworld, have the potential to throw up its own professional killers?

What face does Delhi present today? Consider, for one thing, the crime curve of the capital, which

has been rising uncontrollably over the years. A decade ago, in 1975, there were less than a hundred murders and only a dozen dacoities. Today, the 1975 annual figures have overshot in only half the time; the number of murders in Delhi from the beginning of 1985 to 25 July stood at 181. These are just official figures. The actuals usually, far exceed them. The figures have been rising consistently, exhibiting a distinct trend of crime on the rise: 185 murders in 1980, 200 in 1981, 240 in 1982, 257 in 1983, 274 in 1984. Going by the trend this year, the murder figures should register another increase. From half-a-dozen dacoity cases a year in 1975 we have come to more than three dozen today. The graphs for other crimes like theft, arson, rape and robbery represent a similar upward spiral. It might sound strange but crime takes the highest toll of human lives in Delhi. Last year, Delhi recorded 2,146 killings while in Uttar Pradesh—which takes second spot on the list—only 203 people were killed in the same period. Delhi might not appear as bad as Dhanbad or Gorakhpur but then its underworld is perhaps much more versatile than those in any other place in the country. Its tentacles reach far and wide in every direction. There are drug peddlers from Pakistan and Afghanistan, diamond merchants from Nepal, flesh traders from the eastern borders and gun-runners and merchants of doom from Punjab. Or, nearer home, there are the dacoits of Chambal, the dreaded gangs of western Uttar Pradesh. If there is any point at which they all meet, it is Delhi. Over the years, the capital has become the nerve centre of criminal operations where organised gangs flourish. Has the city not been the headquarters from time to time in the past of killer gangs headed by people like Bhikham Tyagi and dacoit Sundar? Has not the capital often provided sanctuary to wanted criminals like "Dasyu Samrat" Malkhan Singh and Phoolan Devi? When they were on the run they were known to be visiting the capital frequently, quite obviously with a cover provided by the powers-that-be.

Besides, Delhi has produced its own dons of the underworld, some of whom have their fingers in every messy pie. Bootleggers, pimps, narcotics-smugglers, all have their networks spread around the capital. Their growth in the capital has a lot to do with the political protection they have got over the years. Indeed, it is said that organised crime in Delhi has reached such sophisticated levels that its real perpetrators have "gone legitimate," operating only

from behind the scenes, not "dirtying" their hands with the dark deeds that they mastermind. These men who have attained a "respectable status" in society, through their close contacts with politicians who matter, are able to get away with almost anything. Today, things have come to a stage when instead of just the criminal seeking the support of the politician, the traffic runs both ways. Politics and politicians in the capital owe as much to criminals as criminals to politicians. There are at least half-a-dozen "important and respectable" leaders of the capital who get regular "cuts" from the "profits" that the underworld makes.

Among the worst criminally-infested areas of Delhi is the sprawling downtown of Trans-Yamuna, the area that borders not only Delhi but also Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Crime has prospered where jurisdictions cut across. Why is that even though the mushrooming crime in east Delhi is an open secret, nothing seems to stop the wheel of crime from churning on? Said a senior official of the Delhi police: "Often when we seriously want to do something about what is happening in Trans-Yamuna, political pressures come into play and that is the end of it." The Trans-Yamuna harbours a number of dens. It is a cradle of all manner of nefarious activities: gambling, drug-peddling, gun-running and, of course, flesh trade. So organised is the underworld business in Trans-Yamuna and so flourishing, that regular cab services are run for "special clients" from New Delhi and back. In the past, internecine gang rivalry have resulted in bloody wars fought on the streets of Delhi. In 1980, Bhagwana, a bigtime criminal of Delhi who was running several gambling dens in east Delhi was gunned down at Ashram Chowk, right next to the posh Maharani Bagh Colony, in broad daylight. In the days that followed, the Bhagwana group retaliated and, according to police sources, three people of the "enemy camp" were gunned down. In operations such as these, it is said, the most sophisticated kinds of weapons have been used with a great degree of precision. What is more, areas like Ghaziabad and Modinagar, which have witnessed the bloodiest union wars in the past, are not far away from Delhi. As one senior police officer put it, Delhi does have the potential to throw up a professional assassin with a modern weapon.

It was during the 114-day strike by the Delhi textile workers in June 1979, that Lalit Maken made his debut in trade unionism. The



Maken's funeral procession: his popularity cost him his life

first time itself was an indication of things to come. With only his debating prowess, honed over the years as president of the ARSD College Union and a Youth Congress office-bearer, Maken faced big names like Siddhartha Shankar Ray and G.R. Pai, put up by the Birlas and DCM and wrested for the 27,000 striking workers a substantial pay increase and bonus. He also reopened the DA arbitration which finally went in his favour. Lalit Maken had arrived on the trade union scene and was well on his meteoric rise.

With this victory in his pocket he moved onto the Swatantra Bharati Mill strike the following month. Here too a solution was thrashed out and it was no secret that Maken had taken advantage of the prevailing political situation and pressurised Devaraj Urs to get the maximum out from the Charan Singh government. With this he had won over the workers of the five textile mills in Delhi and became their undisputed leader. Then came the agitation by the Britannia Karamchhari Union. Here too he brought about an agreement with the management in spite of the fact that the workers were

under great pressure from the police. The workers benefited by Rs 200 a month.

It was in 1982 that Maken became "Delhi's Datta Samant." Two prominent unions in the capital, the Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking (DESU) and the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) were now his. Winning control over the unions was not an easy job. His election as president of the DTC was contested in the High Court by his rival, Lakshmi Narayan, who was interestingly enough a Congress(I) MP. The DTC had been under Narayan till Maken took over.

Ironically, it was his activity in the DTC union that put a blemish on his career in trade unionism. The 1984 strike of DTC he managed ended in a death. Though Maken paid a large sum of money as compensation to the dead man's family, the young leader was undoubtedly shaken. It was a pale and unnerved Lalit Maken who met members of the press the following day. His credibility too took a downward dip. But it was for a very brief span only.

By then he was the reigning leader of the Delhi Development

Fear Psychosis in Delhi

Early on the morning of 6 August a new security force fanned out and took position in the "VIP" district of New Delhi where most ministers and Members of Parliament live. They were all over South Avenue, North Avenue and other VIP areas of Delhi. Dressed in all-black fatigues and armed to the teeth with knives and automatic weapons, these were the jawans of an elite force now christened the National Security Guards (NSG). These men, said to be handpicked and highly-trained commandos, were first seen immediately after

political observers to raise eyebrows. Which way is the nation moving? Where will this build-up of terror end?

In 1982, T. Rajeshwar, the then chief of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) had mooted the idea of a "VIP security district" around the residence of the Prime Minister and had reinforced the deployment in the area to keep a stricter vigil on the VIP's security. A little later the security ring was further beefed up with commandos of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) but that could not prevent the assassination of Indira Gandhi in her own residence. Since that tragedy, the security situation in the capital has degenerated step by step. It was only the deployment of the army that brought Delhi back from the brink during the November 1984 riots that followed Indira Gandhi's death. The situation had hardly recovered when, in May, Delhi was reeling under the impact of transistor bombs going off in several localities. Today the killing of Lalit Maken and his wife has resulted in a big slideback. So threatened does Delhi feel that deployment of the SFF—a force conceived and launched only for special use—on what should normally have been the police beat has been found necessary.

"There might come a day," said one security expert of the capital, "when we might need something more powerful than even the NSG for normal duty on the streets of Delhi." The police force in the capital has found itself unable to come to terms with the rising tide of violence in the capital city. Violence that has been unleashed not only by the terrorist but also that which has erupted from time to time from the hotbed of Delhi's own underworld. The organised violence of November 1984 is, perhaps, the best example of the havoc Delhi's underworld was capable of creating. Investigations made by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCI) and the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) only proved that political forces had got together and brought hell to Delhi. What is more, it was conclusive evidence of the fact that the mechanism for organised violence in Delhi existed; it was only a question of setting it into action.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi



A police dog sniffs the scooter abandoned by Maken's killers

the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

The unit had been raised at the peak of terrorist activity in Punjab specially for the protection of the Prime Minister. Perhaps, it is only an indication of the fear that the killing of the Congress(I) MP, Lalit Maken has instilled in the country's leadership that the NSG commandos have been brought hurriedly to the streets of Delhi for the general protection of all Members of Parliament. The deployment of such an elite force, though it might have been necessary, has led a lot of

Authority (DDA), New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC) and the Water Supply Workers unions. The biggest rally Lalit Maken ever addressed was of the central government and public sector employees at the Boat Club in November 1983. The speeches of this young, handsome man in his usual cream coloured, often silk *kurta*, were lapped up by the audience. Maken was to speak at a government employees rally at the Boat Club the day after he was gunned down. Over the last two years he had been concentrating on how to get the central government employees to join him. In Parliament on that tragic day he was to speak for the textile workers once again.

It is not that Lalit Maken, even with his suave, affable personality, had no adversaries. In the last few years, ever since he took up trade unionism as his main area of political activity, he had queered the pitch for many. Not only did his Delhi Mazdoor Congress (DMC) destroy several existing trade unions but it also used his prowess to cross swords with big industry. Lakshmi Narayan, now a Rajya Sabha member, was perhaps the most powerful trade union leader of Delhi before Lalit Maken emerged on the scene in the late Seventies. In a matter of years, Lakshmi Narayan's influence had shrunk remarkably. Maken had become the new union king of Delhi and he was the kind of man who never flinched even from criticising the Congress(I), when the party policy went against the stand he had taken. Lately, he had sided with the opposition benches in the Lok Sabha and joined them in ripping apart the new textile policy of the government as "pro-capitalist and anti-labour." He had also taken up cudgels on behalf of the 6,000-odd workers of the Delhi Cloth Mills (DCM) plant at Bara Hindu Rao in New Delhi. The DCM has been wanting to close down the plant and use the 63-acre area in which the factory is situated, for commercial purposes. According to some estimates DCM had more than Rs 100 crores at stake in the project. Maken had not minced words when speaking on the issue alleging foul play not only by the DCM but also by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) which he said had colluded with DCM and permitted the conversion of the industrial land to commercial use.

There has also been talk in the political circles of Delhi about the intra-party rivalry going on in the Delhi Pradesh Congress(I) Com-



After the Lok Sabha victory Rajiv Gandhi with Delhi MPs in January

Sulekha

The DPCC(I) has always been faction ridden and divided into bitterly opposed camps but of late the differences between them had come to a head. At a meeting held at the residence of Congress(I) MP Jagdish Tytler, on 22 June, the dissident group of the DPCC(I) comprising Jagdish Tytler, Lalit Maken, A N Chawla and some other Congress(I) leaders of the city, had charged the union minister of state for parliamentary affairs, H K L Bhagat, with running the DPCC(I) like a 'personal fiefdom' and alleged that he was filling up the party organ with his own people who were 'inefficient and corrupt'. Even on other occasions, Lalit Maken with his firebrand politics had stepped on the tails of colleagues in the party. However, family members of Lalit Maken and his associates in the DMC vehemently deny that he had any personal enemies. Said Chatter Singh, who had long been Maken's right hand man, "Our Lalitji was such a nice person. Even those he opposed politically or on matters of principle were so good to him personally. It was there in his personality. He would not hurt anybody and neither would anybody hurt him. I firmly believe that it was the Punjab extremists who did this dastardly

thing." But it is no secret that Maken had his own stormtroopers who could do jobs for him. Often, they were in trouble in the past. They were, according to the police, also a potential law and order problem in Delhi.

All available information suggests that Maken was an extremely professional killing. His assassins were determined they chased him right up to his drawing room in order to ensure that their man was killed. What is more, they murdered his wife too. Something that a terrorist from Punjab has not done so far, they have not touched women. It has no doubt been pointed out that Maken was on the hit list of the Punjab terrorists for his alleged role in the riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Maken was named as one of the men behind "engineering" the riots in reports by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR). But then Maken was last on the list of such Delhi politicians, and nowhere as prominent as H K L Bhagat or former Congress(I) MPs Dharam Dass Shastri and Sajjan Kumar. A few days before his assassination, the Delhi police had also withdrawn the personal security officer (PSO) given to him after the tansistor bomb outrage in Delhi in

May. At that time the young MP had also been assigned a security pilot car with jawans from a commando unit. That was withdrawn even before the PSO. With no kind of security around him, Maken was an easy target. Chatter Singh, sitting in the DMC union office at Gole Market, refused to the several threatening letters that Maken had received in the weeks before his murder. "I told him the matter was serious but he would just laugh it away," Chatter Singh said that had he not been in Moscow for the World Youth Festival, he would not have let the Delhi police withdraw the security officer. "It was a big blunder," he said.

Sources in the Delhi police do not deny that they had carried out "detailed enquiries" into the two other lines of investigation but then for reasons known only to them the investigation had to be narrowed down to the terrorist angle. With the release of the pictures of Lal Singh, they seemed to have more or less concluded that it was all the handiwork of highly trained Sikh terrorists. Their conclusion, however, was not backed with any concrete evidence. The killers of Maken remain elusive and the conspirators behind the crime more so.

Sankarshan Thakur and Rashmi Seksena, New Delhi

The dangers of resorting to the army to assist civil authorities are manifold and cannot be underplayed

"After a stint in a situation like, say in Punjab or Assam, the army jawan has diluted himself as a soldier," said the armyman. The reasons for this are many. A jawan's training, besides looking into his physical fitness, gives him a certain mental and psychological attitude. It prepares him explicitly for the defence of the country. "He is trained to kill an enemy on sight. The rule is one enemy, one round. This attitude cannot work in a civilian situation. After all he is fighting his own kith and kin." It is then that the soldier starts doing what he should never do, thinking twice before following a command. He is trained to obey instantaneously without thinking but when asked to fire on his own countrymen he may develop a mental hangup. What is more dangerous is that he may carry this attitude to the war front. There it is a matter of survival and that is something he just cannot afford to do. Besides this, other factors contribute to the erosion of the strict army discipline. When the army is called out in a civilian area, the men work together with other para military and the police forces. Here the armyman is exposed to at times corrupt and less disciplined men. It is only a matter of time before the jawan succumbs to temptations.

It was with a sinking heart that an army official (not in uniform then) saw his jawan on duty along with a policeman who was taking money to let every overloaded truck go by the bridge they were guarding. This was in November 1984 en route to Noida from New Delhi. "I just thought to myself and wondered if my jawan was also on the take and if so what a disaster it spelt. Why should we think our men are beyond all this? After all they are also human."

There is a possibility, however remote, of excesses by army men when they are controlling civilians. They soon realise the power they are wielding and what it can bring them. "It happened in Assam and Nagaland after all, did it not? Our men dealt with the tribals in Assam as if they were scum. They did not spare the women and children there. Our training cannot take away the fact that we are from the same stock. They are men who will react in certain ways under press-



Army patrolling the streets of Delhi in the wake of the November 84 riots

ure." A man in uniform misbehaving usually does not get away with it. He is easily noticed and as a warning for the others has to be dealt with strictly. And then the people do not forget in a hurry what the man did.

As the Agra incident has shown there are chances of a clash between the men from the army and the police themselves. This turns into an explosive situation often involving civilians for whose very protection the army has been stationed there. According to the ones from the forces they "belong to a different culture. For an armyman no one is more important than his senior officer for whom he is willing to lay down his life. When he sees a threat to him either physically or even to his status. He cannot bear it and he retaliates. During the Agra incident which took place some years ago the commanding police official allegedly "misbehaved" with the wife of an army officer. The jawans swung into action, making the policemen their targets. Soon the public too joined in.

There is a heavy wear and tear of the army equipment when the men are placed on duty as in Punjab. This equipment the concerned au-

thorities obviously want to preserve for war. "After all assisting the civil authorities is our secondary role," remarked the army officer. The army men also grudge the fact that in such situations their equipment is exposed for all to see and this includes the enemy spies. "The less they know about our state of readiness and armament the better." Heavy equipment lying back at the units is also neglected. "All these things have to be looked after and serviced regularly which is done when the men are posted where they should be. Once they move out, the heavy equipment is not cared for. This is a point against us when we talk of the preparedness of the armed forces."

The army which has a ceiling on the number of men it takes in has to leave a certain part of the border neglected when it moves in to help civilians. "There is little doubt that the border gets neglected when we get embroiled in other duties. The enemy too is fully aware of this and can seize the opportunity to attack as has happened in the case of Iran and Iraq once," said the army officer.

Rashmi Saksena, New Delhi

Doordarshan

The Money Machine

The expansion of the television network has coincided with increased revenues for Doordarshan. Over a ten-year period, earnings from prime time commercial spots have gone up 60-fold and the graph is going higher.

Ritu Sarin reports on the phenomenon.

The inevitable has happened. Midas reigns supreme on Doordarshan today. Witness the almost sixty-fold increase in its yearly revenues through advertisement spots since it decided to go commercial on 1 January 1976 from Rs 0.65 crores to a whopping Rs 60 crores in 1985-86.

The Doordarshan executives still seem to be guided by one principle if you have the inclination, we have the time—TV prime time. This was the invitation that Doordarshan extended in January 1976 when its bureaucratic doors creaked open for outsiders. And before one could say the magic word "Sponsor" there began a steady trickle of enthusiastic advertisers. That was the beginning and Doordarshan's honeymoon with commercial television began.

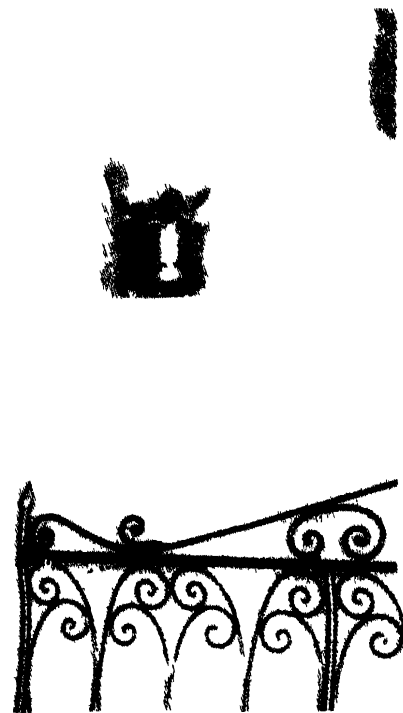
The full impact of its "open-door policy" was felt when in the first year itself Doordarshan pocketed more than half a crore rupees through prime time commercial spots. By 1984-85, Doordarshan bosses were fully alive to the potential of commercialisation when in spite of the love-hate relationship with some of the sponsors, a host of advertisers continued knocking on the doors for an entry. By going commercial, Doordarshan had not only revolutionised a dormant media, it also created a captive audience. It was dishing out entertainment where the lives of Lallu, Badki or Nanhe (*Hum Log*) or the daily routine of Amru Maus, Bhalla or Jagdish (*Khandaan*) became more vital and more important than the romance next door or the antics on the silver screen of a Ami

tabh Bachchan or a Zeenat Aman. Unbelievably, even for the discerning television viewers, imported serials like *Dallas* and *Dynasty* were replaced by the indigenous ones like *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* and *Ados Pados*. Doordarshan had hooked 40 million television viewers to India; soap operas and sitcoms. While viewers cried for more, Doordarshan raked in the pot of gold it discovered at the end of the commercial television rainbow.

After Doordarshan received credit for ushering in the commercial television boom, the question which was asked was: would Doordarshan be able to sustain its commercial success and maintain the heights it had reached? The answer apparently is yes. With nearly a decade having



V.N. Mishra as "Mirza" in *Biwi Natiyon Wali*





Divya Seth, Vinod Nagpal, and V M Badola in Hum Log

lapsed since commercial spots were allowed, Doordarshan has decided to fully capitalise on the new genre of entertainment it has created. With commercial slots on the national hook up booked for six months, Doordarshan has fully stretched out the hand which it had held back initially. New tariffs have been announced, effective from November, which show a marked increase in the rates for advertising on television. More than the obvious increase in tariff, the decision to hike up the rates for sponsored programmes by 100 per cent in some categories is an indication that Doordarshan is fully aware of the power it holds over the television advertiser. Doordarshan is well aware that sponsored programmes, serials and commercial television are here to stay.

Doordarshan had been considering revision of its tariff for sponsored programmes and commercial spots since the past few months. In April, S S Gill, secretary in the ministry of information and broadcasting, had told SUNDAY "We have deliberately chosen a low tariff. If we had made it (advertising on TV) an expensive proposition, the source would have dried up soon. When the tariff is revised, it could well double." Now Doordarshan and the government have realised the threat in the hike of price for television time. The proposed rate structure will bring Doordarshan the major figure of Rs 60 crores from commercial revenue.

According to one estimate, the earnings from sponsors and advertisers in 1985-86 would even cross the Rs 60 crore mark. There will be no looking back for Doordarshan after that. According to Doordarshan officials, considering the present rate structure, a sponsor by advertising on the national network was reaching a target audience of 75 per cent of the population. A sponsor is allowed two minutes of free advertising time in a 25 minute programme on television. If the same free time was converted into 10 second spots at the existing rate, the advertiser would spend over Rs three lakhs. Instead this time was being offered to the sponsor for Rs 35,000 which is a "pittance" according to Mr Gill. Add to this the cost of producing a serial (while *Hum Log* costs Rs 65,000 per episode, *Khandaan* has a production cost of about Rs 90,000 and *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* Rs 1.5 lakh per episode) and the sponsor still gets a good deal.

Even if the escalation of tariff has not taken the advertisers by surprise, the percentage of increase has certainly caught them off guard. With the proposed rates, the cost of sponsoring a 25 minute programme with the two minute disallowance has doubled to Rs 70,000. The cost of sponsoring a 15 minute programme with 60 seconds of free advertising time has increased from Rs 21,000 to Rs 40,000. Even the price for commercial spots has increased by nearly one and a half times. For a 10 second

spot, the advertiser would be soon paying Rs 45,000 instead of the earlier rate of Rs 30,000. Simultaneously, with the revised rate for independent programmes there is a substantial increase in the price. Doordarshan will charge sponsors for programmes like *Here's Lucy* and *Sorcerer*. These programmes can be directly imported by almost doubling the rate from Rs 1,10,000 to Rs 2,00,000. Doordarshan has stated that importing serials will not be encouraged and foreign productions like *Are you being served?* and *The Minister* (which is shortly to be telecast again) can only be bought off the shelf from Doordarshan.

Doordarshan officials maintain that in spite of the revision of tariff, advertising on television will remain a viable alternative to advertising through the print media and on radio. Said J D Bavjia, additional director general, Doordarshan "If you consider the rising costs of production, what we are charging advertisers is peanuts. Since our rates were among the lowest in comparison to other broadcast agencies, we had to place our commercial service on a sound footing. Even with the new rates, we are giving them (sponsors) two minutes for only Rs 70,000. At the rate of Rs 45,000 per spot, this would cost them Rs 2.4 lakhs. Who then is the beneficiary in Doordarshan's scheme of things? Regardless of the assurances, the move by Doordarshan has caused

flurry of activity in advertising circles. Small-time TV advertisers are worried that they would be wiped out. The new rates, it is said, will enable the big names in the television commercial game like Godrej, Vimal, Richardson and Hindustan, Food Specialities Limited and Hin-

dustan Lever, all of whom have multi-crore TV advertising budgets, to survive the new rate onslaught. Advertisers are demanding to know that if Doordarshan and its director general H C Khanna were always insisting that they were not "selling time," why then this

steep price hike?

It is believed that once the new tariff structure is implemented, advertisers could reconsider their budgetary allocations in favour of the print media and reconsider their media options against the continuing commercial viability of advertising on television. Said Ashok Raina, chief executive of Independent Television which is co-sponsoring a 26-episode series, *India 2001* to be telecast from October this year. "We knew the hike would come, but we never imagined it could be so high. By doubling its rates, Doordarshan will cut out the TV budgets of small advertisers. However, this does not mean there will be no sponsors. The television commercial era is here for good." In the opinion of P V Narayanmurthy, media director, OBM, the long term effects of this change would be obvious only on the number of commercial spots aired. "Despite the new rates, advertising on TV is still a good buy. The boom will continue for many more years till it no longer remains a novelty." Others pointed out that it was obvious that Doordarshan was interested only in larger commercial revenue since it had unrealistically revised its rates at a time when media planning of most large advertising agencies and clients had been completed. Complained one producer whose programme is scheduled to be aired from September this year, "Doordarshan expects us to pay according to the new rates in spite of the fact that our contract was signed before the new rate structure was even decided. How are we to explain to our clients that their TV budget has suddenly shot up by more than Rs six lakhs for the 13 episode contract that we signed with Doordarshan?"

Doordarshan and its top bosses at the ministry of information and broadcasting obviously did not have the convenience of advertisers in mind when it announced the hike. If the present trend continues, then Doordarshan will not only continue to cash in on the commercial TV craze, it is also going to accelerate its money spinning spree. According to unofficial estimates, if Doordarshan is hoping to be richer by Rs 60 crores by the end of next year, by the turn of the decade, the annual turnover from commercial TV is expected to fetch Doordarshan a whopping Rs 200 crores. A pointer towards such a target was made by V N Gadgil, minister of state for information and broadcasting, while addressing a meeting of the Advertising Club in Bombay recently. Gadgil had during

All for Rajani

That *Rajani* has finally arrived and has replaced even the most celebrated serial on television, *Hum Log*, was obvious from the latest Da Cunha hoardings of Amul butter up in the capital. "What is yellow on the top and all for Rajani?" reads the copy on the brightly displayed hoarding which shows a caricature of *Rajani*, holding up a slice of bread and butter. The message is up for all to see. The identification of *Rajani*, the angry young housewife of the Sunday morning TV serial fame with viewers and consumers is complete. The serial has caused excitement, stirred up controversy and simply made people love the wife next door personality of *Rajani*, played by Marathi stage actress Priya Tendulkar, who single handedly fights the odds of a mundane domestic existence.



A still from *Rajani* popular

If Doordarshan's own production, *Hum Log* based on a Mexican soap opera broke the ice for commercial sponsors, *Rajani* has established the rule of the new breed of television entertainers who portray the ordinary person. So great was the influence of *Hum Log* that protestors had turned up at the house of Seema Bhargava, who plays Badki, demanding that she be reunited with her fiancé. Badki even received threatening letters from viewers who claimed they would kill her because she had defied Indian traditions and culture. After more than 100 episodes of *Hum Log*, its popularity declined and the serial was believed to have become a slapstick. That is when *Rajani* stepped in. The response to *Rajani* lukewarm at first picked up gradually and today the serial produced by Basu Chatterjee has reached the coveted top of the charts position.

The impact that the idiosyncrasies of *Rajani* have had on television was evident in the recent demonstration by taxi drivers and the association of gas agency owners in Bombay. Both had faced the brunt

of wrath on the television screen. Even as *Rajani* was emerging as the darling of TV viewers, over 1000 taxi drivers marched to the Bombay Doordarshan, and demanded an apology for the unjustified portrayal of taxi drivers in one of the *Rajani* episodes. Even Priya Tendulkar was not spared by the taxi drivers. Result her father Vijay Tendulkar requested her to discontinue acting in the serial which had elicited such a response from viewers.

In spite of all this, *Rajani* has emerged as a national figure. Though the serial is being torn to shreds by some critics, *Rajani* will continue. The serial produced by Mudra Communication for Godrej is one of the few which given an extension after her. A fixed point chart of Doordarshan was announced. Though *Rajani* has been cleared for 26 episodes, there are indications that the show will go on for 52 episodes or even more. *Rajani* sells not because she is perfect and incomparable but because she is imperfect and a mirror image of the Indian housewife.

"What We Take from the Business Houses is Just a Free Bite"

Information and broadcasting secretary S.S. Gill told SUNDAY

Information and broadcasting secretary S.S. Gill is often referred to as "Mr Doordarshan" for he transformed the boring idiot box into an El Dorado for Bombay filmmakers. The man behind the spectacular success of Hum Log, Mr Gill was awarded the Padma Bhushan for the pace with which he set up low-powered TV transmitters throughout the country. Excerpts from an interview with SUNDAY:

Q: Is it true that from 1 November Doordarshan is going to increase its tariff rates for sponsored programmes by 100 per cent?

A: That is true only in the case of the readymade sponsored programmes, for the rest we are enhancing the rates by 20 per cent or 30 per cent.

Q: And the 100 per cent increase is...

A: We now charge Rs 35,000 for airing a sponsored programme for 15 minutes. It costs the sponsor about Rs 100,000 to make the programme and with the tariff it comes to Rs 1,35,000. From November we will charge Rs 70,000, which means that it will now cost the sponsor Rs 1,70,000. That does not amount to a 100 per cent hike.

Q: But Rs 70,000 is the double of Rs 35,000.

A: You have to look at the total cost of the programme.

Q: Doordarshan is now netting Rs 60 crores as revenue from advertisers. What is the projected figure for the next year since your revenue is apparently increasing by leaps and bounds?

A: About Rs 60 crores. We have to lighten the image of television.

Q: Has Doordarshan become a Robin Hood of sorts, taking money from the rich to give to the poor—from the haves to the have-nots?

A: What we take from the haves is just a free bite... What is Rs 40 crores out of lakhs of crores—these business houses would spend the money in any case. They are not giving any donations to television. They are getting good returns.

Q: What happens to all the revenue Doordarshan gets? Will some of it be used to improve the software or will it continue to increase

the hardware?

A: We are going to increase the fees of artistes from 15 August. We will give about Rs 7 crores to independent...

Q: But what about Doordarshan's own productions? Could the advertisement revenue not do something to improve their quality?

A: You forget that 15 per cent goes as commission to the advertisement agencies. Out of the Rs 40 crores, six crores goes to them.

Q: Doordarshan is going in for sponsored programmes in a big way. Are not your own producers and professionals becoming redundant? It seems that some producers have left and others are about to leave Doordarshan.

A: I don't think any producers have left, they might have been suspended. Some of the Bombay producers were transferred because they were doing private work and using the name of Doordarshan to buy status.

Q: Earlier, you had said that sponsored programmes had made television bright. Has it not become a little too bright?

A: It is a question of adjusting the luminosity. When I first came to this ministry, a junior minister told me that television was just a piece of furniture. Now he says that he cannot withdraw his children away from it.

Q: Doordarshan has become rich, but you still do not have decent studios.

A: That is true, there are no regular television studios. We just have ordinary rooms which have been given sound treatment. There are four improvised studios and soon there will be a fifth one. But our television complex is coming up in Mandi House.

Q: To get back to the question of Doordarshan staff. Will you not train more people in Doordarshan itself? Doesn't Doordarshan need to hire more producers?

A: I feel that our staff has to be reduced... our producers are not so competent.

Q: What about the commercialisation of news?

A: Doordarshan is going to engage a private agency to cover news

on a stringer basis.

Q: The Independent Television (ITV)?

A: Yes, on a piece-rate business we will use it as part of the news bulletin if we find it valuable.

Q: How far would you go as far as autonomy is concerned?

A: As far as responsible, independent, informative reporting to the nation is concerned—short of its becoming irresponsible.

Q: Are any examples of this to be seen in the programming?

A: Doordarshan has done a series on corruption, which shows how people accept bribes in various organisations—the tricks they are upto.

Q: Which organisations?

A: Customs, police, telephones, income tax, railways and road transport. Delhi Doordarshan is doing some of them and some are being done by Kamleshwar in Bombay. These will be half-hour episodes to be telecast within a month.

Q: I suppose it will be controversial.

A: Those exposed will resent it. But it goes in line with the government's policy. We want to take people into confidence, we do not want to brush them under the carpet.

Q: The realisation that the audience is mixture...

A: The audience was never immature. Look at Rafani. What a response! We need socially relevant programmes.

Q: How much of the recent change in the current affairs programmes is due to the recommendations of the Prime Minister?

A: Janvani is the Prime Minister's idea. He watches it eagerly. It was also his idea to invite journalists to question ministers. The general public is not always so well-informed.

Q: Some of the serials are very poor in quality. What are the steps being taken to improve your programmes?

A: We have eight new programmes. We have rejected many serials because of their poor quality. Safarname and Ishyaan were so crude and loud.

Interviewed by Shashi Jain



Lt Col Raj Kapoor and Archana Parun Singh on the sets of *Mr Yaa Mrs?*

the meeting reiterated the tremendous potential of television as a revenue-earner and asserted the hold that the idiot box has over the consumer market. Coincidentally, it was at the same venue in November 1980 that the then minister for information and broadcasting, Vasant Sathe, had been requested to allow Doordarshan to open its vistas to private parties. "Doordarshan would do itself, the sponsors and its captive audience a lot of good by allowing talent to filter in where talent had so far been dissuaded," representatives of the ad club told him.

Since 1976, when the first commercial spot was aired and since 1980 when the earliest sponsors entered the scene, Doordarshan has undergone a change from being called a revenue guzzler, it has now become a revenue grabber. With the power that Doordarshan has over both the viewers and advertisers, where does it leave both? Detractors of the sell-through the screen principle point out that in the years since television went commercial, it is the consumers who have become the hapless victims of price inflation—a natural offshoot of expanded advertising budgets and high TV tariffs. As far as the sponsors themselves are concerned, the main grouse, and a valid one at that, is that regardless of the high price they are paying to advertise their products in between serials or imported prog-

rammes, Doordarshan does not give them a guarantee of programme scheduling or fixed time slots. There have been a number of occasions where Doordarshan has exposed its slipshod selection criterion much to the chagrin of the sponsor who has spent precious advertising revenue on the programme. Even today Doordarshan does not give any assurance to its advertisers that after clearing plots of a serial on the production of which lakhs of rupees have been spent, they will be aired till the completion of the contract it has signed with them.

There have been vocal protests about Doordarshan's haphazard selection policy, or the complete lack of it. Murmurings of resentment were first heard when *Mashoor Mahal* produced by Lintas Advertising was discontinued by Doordarshan in spite of the programme having a favourable audience response. There have been allegations of discrimination every time a programme which is high on the popularity charts (*Show Theme*, *Idhar Udhar*, *It's a Woman's World*) were taken off, usually without warning. All this when Doordarshan's own production *Hum Log* which completed its 100th episode in May this year, is showing no signs of ending despite the steady decline in its popularity. Even at the juncture when fresh tariffs have been introduced and new programmes announced (*Basanti*, *Bante*

Bigatte Dekho Magar Pyar Se, *Bibi Nativon Wali*) Doordarshan has failed to come up with a selection policy. With limited viewing slots and sponsors clamouring for more, Doordarshan has not as yet been able to safeguard the interests of advertisers who are pumping lakhs of rupees into the commercial television pipeline. There has been a change in the new guidelines which have been issued. Instead of ensuring a fixed run of programmes which have been cleared, Doordarshan has reserved for itself the decision to continue a programme or pull it off. The document clearly says "Doordarshan will retain the right to reject any episode or episodes even after commencement of a series in case it is felt that the quality of such an episode is not upto the mark. The decision of Doordarshan will be final."

Doordarshan will continue to fire the salvos because of the voracious appetite it whipped up for commercial television in the country. According to Doordarshan's controller of programmes whatever be the rate structure, advertising on television will be "cost effective" because of the impact of TV on viewers. At present, Doordarshan has ensured a programme bonanza for viewers. It now has to decide what it wants on the screen first, not what it does not want.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

The PM's Letter to Doordarshan

Do Prime Ministers write to their ministers? Jawaharlal Nehru often did. So did Mrs Gandhi. And Rajiv Gandhi has continued this tradition which formed part of the legacy of the British. But there is a difference. Such letters of chastisement, as the one which union minister for information and broadcasting, V N Gadgil received on 22 July, were not usually released to the press. On 7 August, the two news agencies, PTI and UNI were called to the PM's office in South Block and briefed about the letter, which appeared almost verbatim in the newspapers the following day. In this letter—which the Prime Minister began with a reference to discussions held with the minister on the subject—Rajiv Gandhi had asked the information minister to tone up the news and features programmes of Doordarshan. He also criticised the image building exercise of himself and his ministers on the small screen.

Mr Gandhi has recently been reviewing the work of several ministries. He has had a round of meetings with secretaries of various ministries, an exercise which is in itself somewhat unprecedented. The letter, which has ended up becoming an open letter from the Prime Minister to the nation, might have been a mere fallout from the exercise of cleaning up the Augean stables, the propriety of which was questioned by Janata Party leader Madhu Dandavate in Parliament on the day after the contents of the letter were published in the news papers.

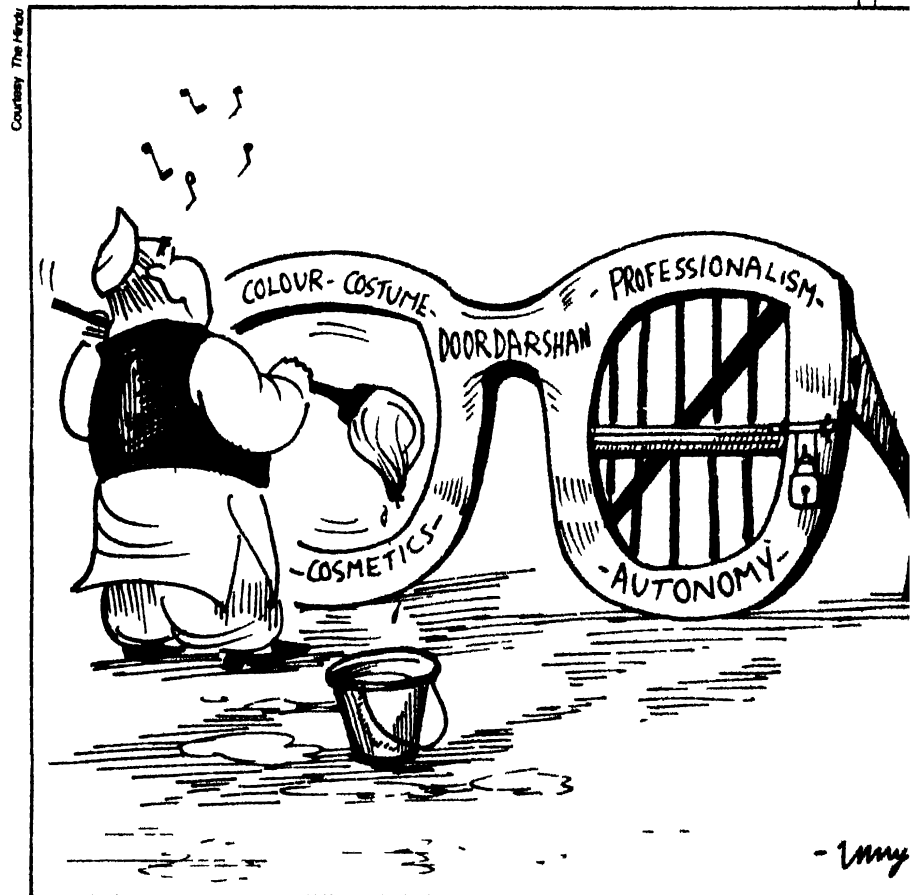
Doordarshan probably came in for some special attention from the Prime Minister for several reasons. One could be the series of articles and cartoons which have recently appeared in the press about the Prime Minister's supposed instructions on the proper attire of TV newsreaders. Ties and coats suddenly appeared on the screen and one of the newspapers even christened Doordarshan "*Tandoor darshan*" because of the shirts and ties during the stifling weather.

Apparently all the Prime Minister had said was that Doordarshan staff appearing on television or those in teams going abroad should be properly attired. Uniforms, as the "letter" says, were not prescribed for Doordarshan staff. But

Doordarshan itself had made some changes in the apparel of their newsreaders on receiving letters from viewers. One such letter was from Minalini Sarabhai who had complained about the plunging neckline of some of the newsreaders. Other people had complained about earrings which jangled and moved a bit too much while Doordarshan presenters moved their heads. "He wanted to bring back our oriental grace to television," said a Doordarshan official.

dom and functional autonomy were issues of increasing concern among the staff of Doordarshan, many of whom were of the opinion that television was being hijacked to Bombay.

After the contents of the Prime Minister's letter were published, there was a sigh of relief among the producers and staff. The TV programme producers' guild described the Prime Minister's remarks as most candid and factual. It was seen as a victory of the newsroom.



The other reason for the Prime Minister's letter becoming public knowledge might be due to the fact that for quite some time, Doordarshan had been in a crisis over its role and functions. Disgruntlement was palpable in the corridors of Akashvani Kendra and Mandi House over the issue that the producers felt they had no say in the kind of programmes being produced and yet they were blamed for poor results. Lack of editorial free-

dom over the bureaucrats and perhaps a step towards the loosening of control of the ministry of information and broadcasting over Doordarshan. Said Doordarshan director general Harish Khanna: "I am delighted to know the views of the Prime Minister and as far as I am concerned this will become the credo of television. The Prime Minister recognises the quintessence of good television."

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

Sanjay Singh, Minister Extraordinary

The MLA from Amethi, Dr Sanjay Singh who created history during the Assembly elections by his unusually high margin of victory, which exceeded Rajiv Gandhi's margin in the Lok Sabha poll, has created another record. Since 1982 while being a minister, he has been holding a post in which he has technically been serving under a subordinate officer of the UP government. Nirmal Mitra reports.

An uproar in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly over a question of constitutional propriety involving the transport minister Dr Sanjay Singh has embarrassed the Narain Dutt Tiwari government no end. Dr Sanjay Singh (he did his doctorate in Hindi literature recently) has for the last four years been holding an office of profit—the chairmanship of a dairy cooperative—which entitles him to a Contessa car and an airconditioned guest house, in addition to the facilities he enjoys as a cabinet minister. A spirited opposition led by the Janata Party member from Karchhana (Allahabad), Reoti Raman Singh, has demanded his resignation on the issue. The chief minister's reply in the legislative debate remains singularly unconvincing. This is for the second time in four months that Dr Singh is the centre of a controversy. His record-shattering victory in the Assembly election from Amethi by a margin of 1,22,000 votes had raised many eyebrows because it exceeded Rajiv Gandhi's margin of victory in the parliamentary poll from the Amethi assembly segment. The above 90 per cent voters' turnout had made the opposition allege that Sanjay Singh had rigged the elections. No one doubted his ability to win the seat;

apparently in a bid to create a record, more votes had been cast than the usual turnout in the elections.

On 2 August, the leader of the Janata Legislature Party, Reoti Raman Singh, pointed out in the Assembly that Dr Singh's appointment as chairman of the UP Pradeshik Cooperative Dairy Federation (PCDF) in 1982 (when he was the minister in charge of animal husbandry) was in complete violation of the rules and

statutes of the state Legislature. The rules require the minister to take prior sanction of the speaker before taking up any other assignment. The Janata member also said that there was a technical anomaly involved: Dr Singh, who is a cabinet rank minister of the state government, in his capacity as the PCDF chairman was working under the registrar of societies, an executive officer of the government. Quoting extensively from the

Indian Societies' Act, Reoti Raman Singh said that Dr Singh had brought down the dignity of the House and his status as a member of the Legislature and a minister. The prestige of all other MLAs in relation to the executive, Reoti Raman Singh said, had been lowered.

The debate called in question Dr Singh's membership of the Legislative Assembly. The opposition's arguments centred around two points: first, that the minister by his own admission, was enjoying additional facilities, and second, that he had not sought the clearance of the speaker before accepting the other office.

Elaborating on his charge, Reoti Raman Singh told this correspondent: "The question is whether a minister can hold the post of chairman of a cooperative, which means being appointed an officer of that cooperative. The appointing au-



Dr Sanjay Singh: record performance

thority is the registrar, cooperative societies, Uttar Pradesh." Dr Sanjay Sangh is alleged to have actually got himself appointed chairman of the PCDF by influencing the registrar of cooperative societies in 1982, when he was minister of state for animal husbandry and forests. The registrar has since changed, and Dr Singh has continued to hold the post. Although he does not draw a salary as PCDF chairman, Dr Singh does make extensive use of PCDF facilities. A Contessa car is constantly found parked outside his ministerial bungalow on Vikramaditya Marg, Lucknow. The transport minister also liberally uses the PCDF guest house, a bungalow in a posh Lucknow colony, Mahanagar.

As per the sixth edition of the UP Vidhan Sabha Speaker's Rulings (page 19, para 67), whenever a member belonging to any of the legislative wings is to be appointed chairman or a member of a committee, he has to take prior permission of the speaker. If he is not given permission by the speaker, he cannot become the chairman or member of any such committee under the government.

Sanjay Singh being the PCDF chairman has created other problems as well. While being the transport minister, he is also the chairman in the animal husbandry department. He is thus working under the present minister for animal husbandry, Mrs Benibai. A very peculiar situation therefore has arisen. No work is being done in the animal husbandry department. The officers are confused as to who they should obey, the PCDF chairman or the animal husbandry minister (Mrs Benibai too has cabinet rank).

Chief minister Narain Dutt Tiwari's reply was far from satisfactory. "The respected member has raised a question of propriety. On the face of it, the question appears serious and controversial. But if we probe the matter, it does not seem as difficult or sensitive as it has been made out to be. When this dairy federation was first set up, I had the pleasure of placing a brick on its foundation, back in 1962, in Allahabad. A prominent leader of Allahabad who was associated with the cooperative movement, Sri Mangala Prasadji, was the founder chairman and I had the pleasure of being vice chairman of the board. I served in the dairy federation for three or four years. There is no secret provision that a minister cannot become chairman. In many places the ministers are chairmen of different committees. There is no unconstitutionality in



N D Tiwari will the guilty be asked to stand up?

Sandeep Shankar

involved. This decision (to appoint Sanjay Singh chairman of PCDF) was taken in the interest of the milk federation."

The chief minister added that Dr Singh was appointed PCDF chairman when he was minister of state for animal husbandry and forests, that he was best suited for the post because of his technical knowledge, personal interest and political experience. The milk production in the state under 'Operation Flood' during his chairmanship of the federation had gone up by three and a half lakh litres. Another reason Mr Tiwari gave for keeping Dr Singh on the federation was 'continuity'.

Not convinced, Ravindra Nath Tiwari of the Janata said. The Salaries, Emoluments, and Facilities Rules, 1981 clearly mention the facilities that a minister is entitled to (a minister gets a salary of Rs 1,500 per month, a bungalow and an official car). Section 10 of the rules states: A minister during the term for which he is getting his emoluments can neither accept anything else nor is he entitled to take part in any business transaction other than his ministerial emoluments. The purpose of this rule was to see that a minister does not come under any external influence or greed so that his loyalty was assured. If any minister accepts anything other than his salary as a minister, that would be treated as an office of profit. I would like to know that since we are not entitled to become chairmen or members of any cooperative society without the permission of the speaker, has the minister taken permission from you (to Speaker)? Does the chief minister have no regard for the conven-

tion? Why does he want to break the convention?"

During the debate, Dr Sanjay Singh made a feeble attempt to defend himself. The bungalow and car are not my personal property. It is the PCDF guest house which is used by me and other officials who accompany me on inspection tours, he said. The chief minister's reply did not satisfy the opposition either. But the chair let the matter pass by saying that the treasury benches could not be compelled to reply on this matter.

The speaker of the Assembly, Niaz Hasan, who was not in the House when these exchanges took place, is himself no stranger to the practice of holding honorary posts. Niaz Hasan is himself a member of the Alpa Sankhyak Vitya Vikas Nigam (Minorities Finance and Development Corporation), a post which does not, unlike Dr Singh's venture, involve additional facilities.

Sanjay Singh is an extraordinary politician. His family is not new to politics (his father, Rananjay Singh, the erstwhile Raja of Amethi was the MLA from Amethi earlier). He shot into prominence during the emergency when Sanjay Gandhi chose Amethi as his parliamentary constituency. Between 1977 and 1980, along with Akbar Ahmed 'Dumpy', Sanjay Singh was the closest political colleague of Sanjay Gandhi. He did not follow Menaka Gandhi like Dumpy did after Sanjay Gandhi's death. Slowly he became Rajiv Gandhi's confidant. Today he is a cabinet minister whom chief minister N D Tiwari cannot touch even if he wishes to.

Farooq Abdullah Meets 'Friend' Rajiv Gandhi

Will democracy be restored in Kashmir now?

“I have regained my lost friend,” announced the National Conference leader, Dr Farooq Abdullah, at a rally in Srinagar on 10 August. The meeting in the Iqbal Park had been organised to mark the anniversary of the dismissal of the Sheikh Abdullah government (and the detention of the Sher-e-Kashmir) by the Jawaharlal Nehru government in 1953. Farooq Abdullah had met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi on 8 August. The two were good friends on the personal level till they differed politically over the distribution of tickets between the National Conference and the Congress(I) on the eve of the 1983 state Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Rajiv Gandhi, then a Congress general secretary, had led the party's team in the negotiations which failed. After that, the relations between the two went sour. Between mid-1983 and 8 August, the two friends did not

meet. The election victory of Farooq Abdullah was attributed to “rigging” by Rajiv Gandhi's party. On the day of Id last year, Rajiv Gandhi's party helped the defectors from Farooq Abdullah's party, led by Abdullah's brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohammad Shah, to pull down the democratically-elected government in the state. A minority government of defectors has been ruling Jammu and Kashmir with legislative support from the Congress(I) MLAs since then. In this background, when Farooq Abdullah announced after meeting Rajiv Gandhi that “I am happy now for I have rejoined my lost friend,” it was no political rhetoric. No announcement has come from Rajiv Gandhi's side so far, but judging by the tone of Farooq Abdullah's statements, the hatchet seems to have been buried.

The fact that Farooq Abdullah was keen to mend his fences with Rajiv Gandhi had become clear from his speeches made at Shopian and Badgam a week before he went to the capital to meet the Prime Minister. The ties between the Congress(I) in Jammu and Kashmir and the National Conference (Khalida) have been strained in the past few months. The government of G.M.Shah has been better known for its corruption than for efficiency. The meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah

in fact took place a day before G.M.Shah and his wife Khalida (elder sister of Dr Abdullah) left for Hajj pilgrimage. While Farooq Abdullah has gone back to Srinagar to triumphantly announce that he and Rajiv Gandhi have settled their differences, the National Conference (Khalida) finds itself helpless, its president and the chief minister having flown to Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage.

“Our future relationship will be built on trust,” thundered Dr Farooq Abdullah at the Iqbal Park meeting. August 10 is observed as the “black day” by his party. That such an announcement should come on the “black day” is significant. He described Rajiv Gandhi as the “dynamic” Prime Minister and said that an amicable settlement on the state's political problems would be reached.

The patch-up moves of Farooq Abdullah have been criticised by his allies in the state, Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq of the Awami Action Committee and Abdul Ghani Lone of the People's Conference. Dr Abdullah used the Iqbal Park rally to answer his critics. “I will prefer to die than to sell your honour,” he said amidst thunderous applause. He said that the National Conference could easily have had recourse to a violent agitation for restoration of democra-



**Farooq Abdullah:
bonhomie again?**

cy in the state. But that would have created further problems and the state's economy, which already was in a shambles due to G.M.Shah's misrule, would have suffered further. "This is why I preferred to seek a solution through peaceful means and urged my opposition colleagues (Mirwaiz and Lone) not to stress for an agitation," Dr Abdullah said.

Dr Abdullah has described his meeting with the Prime Minister as the "first step towards the restoration of political stability in Jammu and Kashmir." Apparently the Prime Minister has assured him that the days of the G.M.Shah regime are numbered. Now the options will be three-fold: the imposition of Governor's Rule (under the state's Constitution, President's Rule in Jammu and Kashmir is known as Governor's Rule); installation of a Farooq Abdullah ministry either by engineering defections from the party led by Khalida Shah (and there are willing defectors on the other side); or holding fresh elections in the state. Dr Farooq Abdullah is known to favour elections. If all goes well, September or October could well see elections in the most picturesque state of the Indian union.

The Congress(I)'s stand is still not clear. Officially, it will continue to support the Shah ministry but the high command's repeated discussions with Jammu and Kashmir Congress(I) leaders prove that the party's Kashmir policy had undergone a change. While CM G. M. Shah and Farooq Abdullah took turns to come to Delhi and meet the central leaders, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the Jammu and Kashmir Congress(I) president, who camped in Jammu and Kashmir House, is keeping a close watch and even advising the high command on new developments.

A dominant role, in the behind-the-scenes activities, is being played by Begum Akbar Jahan, Farooq's mother and Sheikh Abdullah's widow. It is believed that the Begum is more keen on "normalising relations" in the family. Ever since G. M. Shah has begun feeling uncertain about his position, his wife Khalida has been trying to mend fences with her mother and brother, Farooq Abdullah. She has met, among others, her sister Suraiya (who sided with Farooq when the family split) and brother, Tariq Abdullah. According to people close to Farooq Abdullah, the Begum has agreed to normalise relations with her daughter's family provided Farooq Abdullah is accepted as the unchal-



G.M. Shah: are his days numbered?

lenged leader of the National Conference, but Farooq himself is against any settlement with G. M. Shah because he does not regard it as a family battle and is even against shaking hands with G. M. Shah. Now that he has met Rajiv Gandhi, he would be even more determined not to mend fences with G. M. Shah politically. Any alignment with him at this stage, feel his advisers, would be political hara-kiri for Farooq as he has been opposing the G. M. Shah government all along.

But if the Congress(I) has really decided not to support G. M. Shah, what is it to do? That appears to have been the subject of discussion when Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah met on 8 August. The two sides appear to have some differences of opinion. While Farooq Abdullah favours Governor's Rule

for some time before holding fresh elections, the local Congress(I) is against such a move as it is confident of the people's support. Besides, some of them are also against an alliance with Farooq Abdullah. By doing that, they fear that their own political future as an independent party is at stake. It is also not as yet clear whether Farooq Abdullah and the Congress(I) high command have worked out the modalities of the agreement but both Congress(I) and National Conference (F) leaders felt that it would take some time before they could arrive at one. Nothing certainly, assured one J and K Congress(I) leader, till G. M. Shah is back from the Haj pilgrimage.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar and Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi.

After A.R. Antulay, Now Vasantdada Patil

Another former chief minister of Maharashtra is under a cloud. The opposition has levelled serious corruption charges against Vasantdada Patil. OLGA TELLIS reports

When Vasantdada Patil came to live in Bombay with his young wife Uma him in the Sixties he had made a name for himself in the cooperative hierarchy: he was a chairman of a number of cooperative institutions like banks and sugar cooperatives. He was also involved in Maharashtra politics. At that time Shalinitai, a law graduate, helped Dada with his office work including his correspondence and travelling bills. Often there were complaints that the bills submitted by Dada were inflated. Vasantdada used to look into the bills and correct them whenever such complaints occurred.

The story goes that one day when Dada's close friends went to visit him

in his modest apartment on Gunbow Street, a small lane that runs parallel to the busy Pherozeshah Mehta Road, they found him lying on the bare floor. He had not shaved for a week and he looked distraught. He refused to speak and continued to stare blankly at his guests. Inquiries also revealed that Vasantdada was on a fast and had not eaten for eight days. It was a penance, he replied, for something which Shalinitai had done. She had bought gold and taken it in Dada's official car to Sangli; the friends learnt. She had done nothing wrong, Shalini insisted. She had bought the gold in the open market; it was neither smuggled nor had she robbed it from anyone. The honest and strict disciplinarian that he was

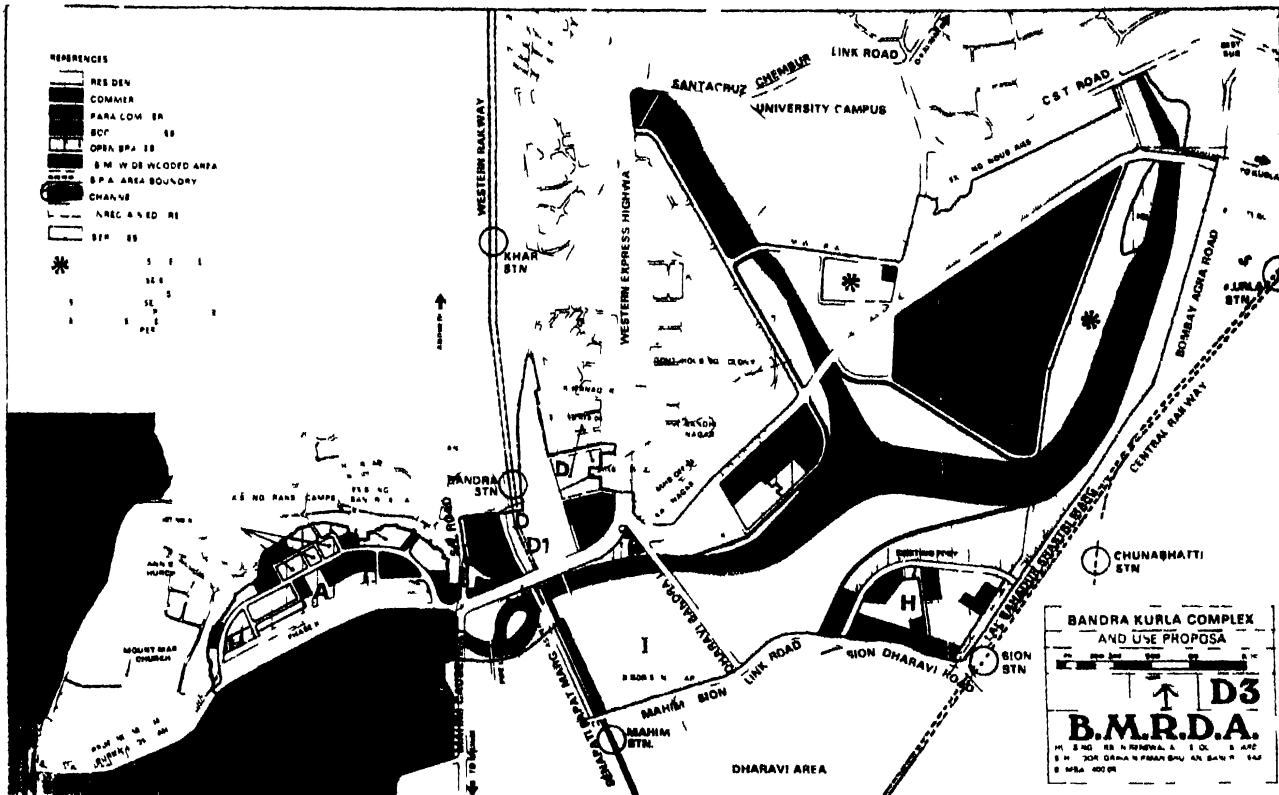
Dada could not understand why Shalinitai had taken the gold in his official car. She explained, Dada would never be able to understand her. She had seen a life of struggle and poverty with a sick husband and four children.

Vasantdada Patil till that time, embodied in himself the ideals of a Congressman. That however was a long time ago. He changed overnight sometime in 1977. He forsook his noble ideals and involved himself in a normal politician's activities. Dada, according to someone who has watched and played a role in Dada's early political life, tasted money power in politics when he wanted to oust the then chief minister (and the present union home minister) Shank-



Vasantdada Patil, flanked on his right by his grandson and son, Prakash Patil, MP: the opposition target

SPECIAL REPORT



Map showing the 23,086 sq mts of land in the 'H' block to be disposed of by the Bombay Metropolitan Development Authority

arrao Chavan from his post. Dada's excuse was that Chavan had lost the parliamentary polls in the state.

Ironically like his predecessor A R Antulay Vasantdada has been taken to task by his own partymen as well as the opposition because both sections see him as a potential toe and hurdle in the political arena. To date Dada has called the tune in the ruling party as most of the ministers in the cabinet are his supporters beginning with the chief minister himself. How long they remain so is a moot issue at this point of time. The leader of the opposition Sharad Pawar, would like to wreck what is left of Vasantdada's political career because the latter destroyed his chances of joining the Congress(I).

On the opposition front the BJP would like to see the former chief minister exposed in order to refurbish its image as crusaders against corruption. The BJP members were also the ones to bring former chief minister A R Antulay into the dock. This image is politically expedient because their role as a party for Hindus has been taken over by the Congress(I) at the centre and by the Shiv Sena in Bombay. Today, they can only make themselves relevant to the masses as champions against corruption.

Viewed in this background, the opposition's expose of the Dharavi

land scandal linking the ex chief minister as the person behind it is significant. The scandal involves land worth over Rs 50 crores being changed from public use to private use. The land deal in Sangli took place between January 1983-85 when Vasantdada Patil was CM and the minister for urban development. Way back in November 1984 the then collector of Sangli Leena Mehendale, had written a confidential note to the secretary urban development and to the secretary revenue mentioning a grave conspiracy between some officials and private parties to cheat the government of crores of rupees. She asked for an immediate enquiry into the conspiracy. As Sharad Pawar, the leader of the opposition said on the floor of the House during a two hour debate on the Sangli land scandal land use was changed with such speed—in one case in four days—that if the government worked with such efficiency the people would have no problems.

The following are some of the cases that the opposition members brought up during the two hour discussion on the issue in the Assembly.

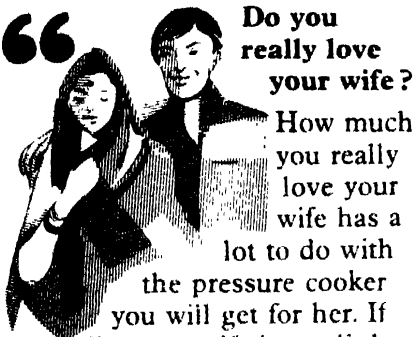
- In city survey No 349, 350, 352 land reserved to house the homeless was released in favour of D B Patil, a member of the Rajya Sabha and a relative of Vasantdada Patil. While

one part of the land was sold to Patil the other was sold to Vishnupant Patil nephew of Dada along with three other nephews Wishwas, Shankar and Arvind Patil and to Prakash Patil MP son of Vasantdada Patil.

- In another case the telephone and telegraphs department building which the executive engineer has been trying to get for the exchange since 1962 was overnight sold to Patangrao Kadam for a paltry sum Rs 30,000. In December 1983 the land which was reserved in the Sangli Master Plan for a public purpose was given to Mr. Kadam's Bharatiya Vidyaapeeth. The area involved is 2,274.3 sq metres. Patangrao Kadam it may be recalled was not given a ticket in the Assembly election and he fought as an independent and won. He has now given his support to the Congress(I).

- In survey No 444 1/2 1,1347 sq metres were declared surplus under the Land Ceiling Act and reserved for the Regional Transport Office. The owners of the land, Shamrao and Baburao Gavali in league with the then collector of Sangli R P Wagh, released this land to two cooperative housing societies. The Gavalis benefited to the tune of Rs two or three crores as the total area was about nine hectares behind the Civil Hospital, Sangli.

“



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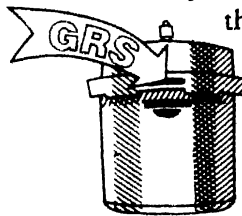
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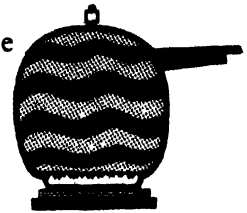
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SPECIAL REPORT



Shalinital Patil did Vasantdada Patil change under her influence?

Mukesh Day

• Survey No 467 was reserved for a truck parking lot. This was released by R P Wagh for the private use of a housing society for *mamlatars*, collectors, etc. The land involved was one acre and 34 *guntas*. It was agricultural land which was converted to non agricultural land for the purpose of the housing societies.

• A city bus terminus was allotted 1.14 hectares in survey No 190 1A and the Rajmata Cooperative Housing Society was given this land literally for a song. The land was in the name of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). But in the interest of some private parties, the MSRTC was made to change its decision that it needed the land for the bus terminus. In August 1984, the MSRTC wrote a letter saying that it did not need the place. It is understood that the MSRTC chairman was transferred and the new chairman wrote the obliging letter. The land in this area is worth between Rs 50 to Rs 100 per sq foot as it is in the heart

of the city and the Rajmata Cooperative Housing Society which paid a pittance for it is said to consist of officers of the Sangli Sugar factory where Dada's nephew is the chairman. Some of his other relatives and workers owing allegiance to him are also members.

• In Sangli 8,333 sq foot of land reserved for a municipal building in survey No 1085 was handed over to a private person in November 1983.

• The Vasantrao Bandhu Trust Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya has been given one acre of land out of three and a half acres reserved for building housing cooperatives for government officers. One acre of land is worth Rs 50 lakhs in this area, it is reported.

• 23,222 sq metres of land reserved for rehabilitating slum dwellers, was given to the Shri Shahu Business Education and Research Centre for 11 years by a decision taken on 31 January 1985. It is alleged that the centre belongs to A D Shinde, an auditor of the Sangli Sugar Corp.

erative

• Mrs Shaila Prakash Patil wife of Prakash Patil MP, and daughter in law of the former chief minister Vasantdada Patil has been given prime land on lease near the police chowki.

In the Dharavi land scandal a decision was taken to sell 23,400 sq metres of residential land as commercial land by the BMRDA. An advertisement was issued in the *Times of India* and the *Loksatta* on 2 March 1985 calling for tenders for this land which would have an ISI (Floor Space Index) of 2. This would give the builder a bonanza of five lakh sq feet. The land in Dharavi is valued at Rs 1,500 per sq ft. So, when the buildings are completed the builder would get Rs 75 crores. The tender which won the builder the contract was for Rs 10.15 crores. Even if it cost him Rs 200 per sq ft to construct it means Rs 25 crores. He will sell it at Rs 75 crores and make a net profit of Rs 50 crores. This is the opposition's calculation. The opposition alleged as Mrs Min al Gore of the Janata Party did on the floor of the House that Dada got some of this money. Dada who was present in the House on all three occasions when this topic generated a heated debate in Marathi sat passively throughout not uttering a word.

The Maharashtra chief minister Shivajirao Indirji Naik bowing to the demands of the opposition had announced that the state government would hold a judicial inquiry into the alleged malpractices in land deals under the Urban Land Ceiling and other Acts in Sangli. The inquiry would be held either by a judge of the Bombay High Court or a retired judge who would be appointed in consultation with the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

Two ministers Dr Ram Manohar Laxpathi and Dr V. Subramaniam and the former chief minister are involved in the Dharavi land scandal. Efforts are being made at the ministerial level to pass the buck on to an IAS officer A S Batabyal who is the managing director of the Bombay Metropolitan Development Authority. Vasantdada Patil as the then chief minister was the chairman of the BMRDA and the chief secretary B G Deshmukh was the chairman of the executive committee of the BMRDA. Now Mr Deshmukh has allegedly been asked by the present chief minister to look into the scandal which Ram Naik of the BJP said was like asking a police constable to look into the affairs of the police commissioner.

With Belligerence and a Smile

If there was "only two per cent" of the Sikh population in Punjab which had begun to dream dreams of Khalistan, particularly in the last four years, Operation Bluestar has taken it to ten per cent. These are statistics put forward by Inder Gujral, the man who has also sedulously affirmed throughout the crisis that has swept Punjab that there is such a factor as the moderates versus the militants amongst the Sikhs. I have always held the view that the difference is only in style, not in substance. The reach towards ten per cent is a frightening escalation but if anybody thinks of even the two per cent as "only two per cent" they would do well to remember that the total number of people who went to jail for India's independence was just about one lakh out of an entire population around that time estimated at 240 million. It was certainly less than two per cent of that population which first formulated the design for India's independence, then articulated it and finally won for it the massive pressures that yielded success.

Sikh militancy in Punjab could not win this overt support but it found its roots in the silence which fell like a blanket on the rural

Operation Bluestar, seen as a stern attack upon the Sikh soul, was almost a defensive, academic exercise which bolted the stable door after the horse had flown.

countryside and the Sikh intelligentsia. The government of India's mistake was not to recognise that the Bhindranwale phenomenon was both the result of the stirrings of a Sikh identity and the cause of its snowballing momentum. Operation Bluestar, seen as a stern attack upon the Sikh soul, was almost a defensive, academic exercise which bolted the stable door after the horse had flown. It effected the removal of Bhindranwale from the scene, released the atmosphere from fear and gave an opportunity to those who were his political opponents within the fold to again stake their claims to leadership through the saner channels of talk, discussions and persuasion. But the issues remained the same. The Sikh psyche was in the air, wanting to land.

Mrs Gandhi was right in her assessment that yielding to Akali demands framed within the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, no matter which version it was, would not solve the problem of their political intransigence, for there would come, after a while, yet another set of demands. Where she made the mistake was in not initiating moves to countermand the fundamentalist postures, the retrograde values about the social structure, and the attempt to put women behind by three decades which were becoming part of the way of Akali thinking, Sant Longowal included. Normally, fundamentalism is the last-ditch battle fought by a losing culture against the future. What was happening within the Sikh fold, the natural modernisation of its youth and its social mores, could be stalled or transmuted only by an appeal to religion and by attributing the desire for contemporaneity to Hindu machinations. You saw the strange phenomenon therefore of a leading community of a country holding prize positions in government, business and the armed forces, closely interlinked in family ties with the Hindu majority, complaining of discrimination. Bhindranwale voiced it in belligerent terms, Longowal with a smile.

The fight to regain for Punjab its composite cultural functioning and for the Sikhs to feel less alienated, is going to be long and arduous. It can be done effectively and with imagination only if the facts are faced squarely:

- There has been a steady build-up of Sikh separatism;
- It has sought expression in violent methods culminating in the assassination of a country's Prime Minister;
- The November riots in Delhi have made the movement more defiant but insular;

And there is a slow but planned population trickle of the Sikhs back to Punjab, partly out of a desire for security and partly to strengthen a base. You have to talk to Muslims to know what Sikh youth really



Sant Longowal celebrating the signing of the Punjab accord with his followers

ESSAY

feel, the resentments, the ambitions, the purposes they have in mind. It is a minority to minority equation which allows for total frankness. The truth that emerges is not a happy one.

The recent accord between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and H S Longowal can be viewed therefore only as a stop gap arrangement, a temporary breather. What is required is a follow up of a kind that will nourish a national consciousness. This can be done in the short term through the careful political secularising of Punjab and extensive use of the media, even a cassette campaign, largely like the one that got Bhindranwale's fanatical speeches into every remote village, and in the long term, through strategies as radical as administrative restructuring and forging national economic links which would pre-empt any ambition in any area to function outside the constitutional framework of a unified India.

The lessons of the Punjab crisis have been as traumatic as those of the Emergency. If the experience of the Emergency consolidated India's decision in favour of democracy, the threat of separatist politics and the religious shadow over secular governance in Punjab has confirmed the need for a stronger integration of the Indian state. What is merely regionalism in one area acquires a much more inflammable potential where religion comes in as an added factor. This experience has pinpointed the failure of the Indian state to establish viable emotional and economic national links that could withstand both internal and external forces whose interests lie in the comparative weakening of the country. At least there is an awareness now that these forces do exist. When Indira Gandhi talked of such efforts there was a reaction amongst the intelligentsia not only to make fun of her but to label her warnings as the usual ploy of a politician to cry 'CIA or war' when domestic issues became intractable. Richard Nixon's revelations about his intentions to apply nuclear pressure on India in 1971 now proves that those warnings were not without foundation. Nor her repeated exhortations to people within her own party and to the Akalis that they should beware of efforts being made by super power interests and satellite allies to create dissension where none really existed. The terrorist camps in the USA, the training schedules in Pakistan, the refuge to extremists, Ecuador's attempts to sustain the concept of Khalistan through meetings with Sikh extremists in the UK—Ecuador itself being an economy bolstered by the US—all these indicate a carefully seasoned attempt to make trouble for an India on the move, with a take off economy which may become too strong for the strong to allow.

The Punjab experience should also lead to a rethinking about the tolerance with which religion and politics are allowed to mix in a secular state. No communal party henceforth should be accepted as a political arm of opinion. Whatever the accord and the manner of its implementation in the near future,



United Akali Dal activists being arrested by the police after the 30 July clash

The lessons of the Punjab crisis have been as traumatic as those of the Emergency. If the experience of the Emergency consolidated India's decision in favour of democracy, the threat of separatist politics has confirmed the need for a stronger integration of the Indian state.

one must recognise the unfortunate fact that the Akali party is purely and simply, communal. Only Sikhs can be its members, no other member of any other community. This is an anachronism in a modern country aiming towards building a rational society. What is worse is that a communal party should operate from the precincts of a religious sanctuary like the Golden Temple. It is heartening to see that in the midst of these medieval goings on the Sikh Centre of Jalandhar under the chairmanship of Dr Jasbir Singh Lausanjh, should come out with the announcement that they would launch a mass movement if the rival Akali Dals did not shift their offices from the Golden Temple complex by the end of September. They affirmed in their resolution that "this was necessary to maintain the religious sanctity of the gurdwaras".

Thank God, somewhere there's a sane reaction, rational argument. That is what keeps India alive. In this context, the fear that holding elections would accentuate the polarisations that have already taken place in Punjab between the Hindus and the Sikhs is too pessimistic a view to take. The polarisation is already there. The logic of having to win a consolidated vote might, make existing parties function less communally and even bring about a new Hindu Sikh mix. It might not, yet political imperatives have a chance to work better than administrative ones.

"Penguin Will Put Works of Indians All Over the World"

Peter Mayer, chief executive of Penguin Books, told SUNDAY

Peter Mayer, the chief executive of the Penguin group took over in 1975 and has since pursued an aggressive marketing publishing policy which has helped Penguin regain some of the ground it lost in the last decade. The success helped is did the many titles that were taken Mr Mayer in America know the world of books well. He has written two books himself one on pacifism and the other a book for children. Excerpt from the interview.

will own 40 per cent in India, 60 per cent will be owned by Ananda and its nominees.

Q Who will head the company here?

A There will be a full time editor. Krishwant Singh has agreed to function as literary adviser. We had initially thought that it would be mostly fiction but it is a matter for the Indians to decide—there will be a large proportion of sociological, political and economic issues and history as well. What would be especial

done—to make it holier than it ever was in his time—Allen Lane was a merchant which is not incompatible with being a publisher. He understood that to publish a book is to do more than just print it. You have to see to it that the books are available in different kinds of locations and see to it that the company is finally profitable. On the one hand Penguin is an institution but if it becomes so much of an institution it ceases to be a publishing company. One has to take a chance—with taste, with politics.

Q What did you do?

A Penguin was priced rather similarly in small Penguin size. But all sorts of things happened in retailing and book publishing. We changed Penguin policy so that books were published in appropriate forms. The Penguin range became wider and we changed the approach to our covers. The look for wide markets or potential bestseller books had to be considered.

Q You had to grow commercial.

A Earlier there was no competition to acquire the rights to many books. Now we have to bid against others. We could not let others operate on our terrain. We also had to operate on their terrain. Allen Lane also used to publish advertisements for chocolates and airlines. He was running a company and it had to survive. There are no advertisements today though.

Q What about film tie ins?

A We do more if you count all the Penguin classics which have been filmed—if you put the photograph of Shashi Kapoor on the cover more people will buy the book—the same must be true of India if you put the stars on the cover. When we did *Brideshead Revisited* we were selling 12 000 books a year but in the year of the television series we sold 300 000. We kept it in two editions, one cheaper and the other with the stars which was more expensive. The latter sold more. Between 1978 and today the classics list is twice as long. Gresham's law that the bad drives out the good is complete nonsense. I don't like the word 'bad'.

Interviewed by Madhu Jain

Q Why did Penguin decide to start up publishing concern in India and enter into a collaboration with Ananda Publications?

A We have long association with India. In the history of Penguin publishing, Russia and Company brought the first Penguin to India. It is fortunate for us this anniversary year to announce it very publicly that we are going to build on this tradition of Penguin in India by running a publication company here. The coherence of our policy of not publishing books to Canada, the USA and Australia but to try and make a contribution to those countries is a real one. Not only do we publish for people in other countries, we do for books. We started talking with Ananda about two years ago—in a modest basis. But hopefully, by the end of the year we will try to bridge the gap between all the different literary groups in India. Some coming from Russia in connection with the books written by people like Tolstoy, unless they are translated into Hindi or English. The other group of Hindi there are a lot of titles which was a form of common sense. It helped bind the cultural life of the country. If Indians are going to read the works of their country, it is all true that could have been people would read that. So even if it is an internal market, it will be exposed to the world.

Q How will your collaboration with the publisher from those with the Penguin group in Australia?

A It is the only one which is not completely written by Penguin. We



Peter Mayer

is attractive to Indian authors is that Penguin would put their works all over the world.

Q How many books do you plan to publish in a year in India?

A We will start modestly. Ten to 12 books a year.

Q Did you make many changes in Penguin?

A Penguin in its lifetime has had many ups and downs. After Allen Lane's death there was confusion. Nobody had his authority. People tried to imagine what he would have

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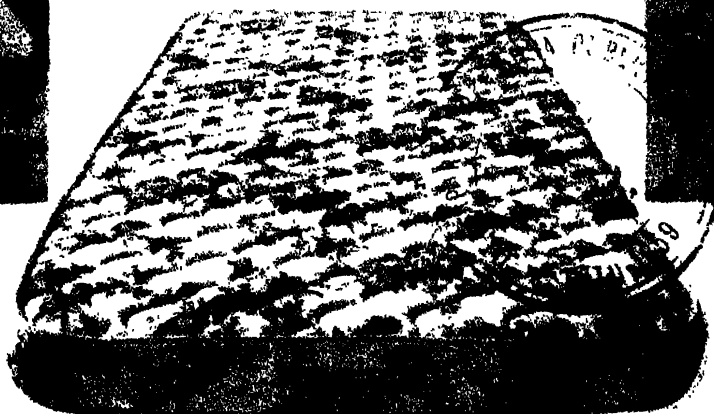
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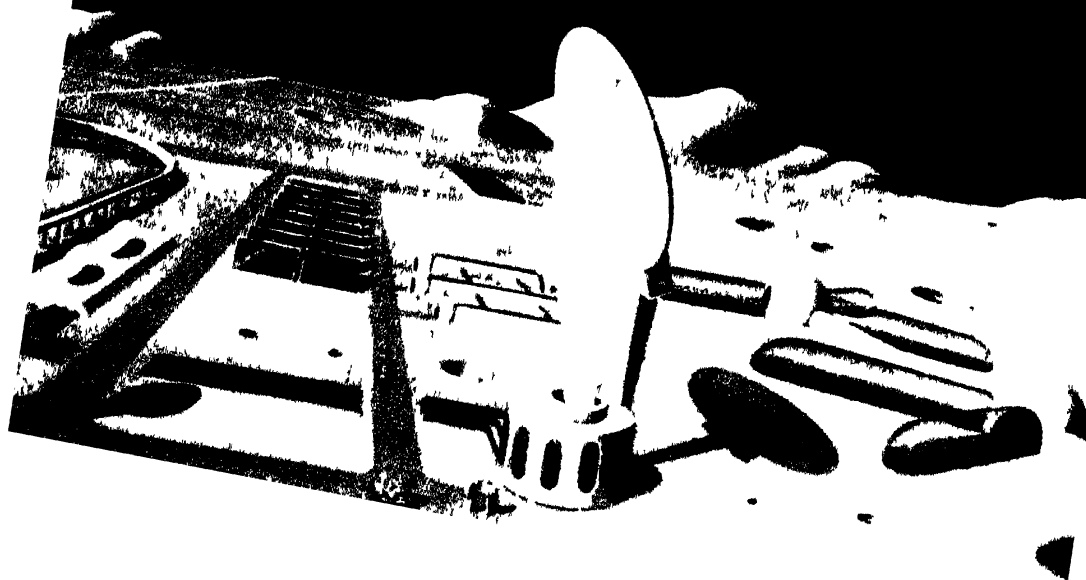
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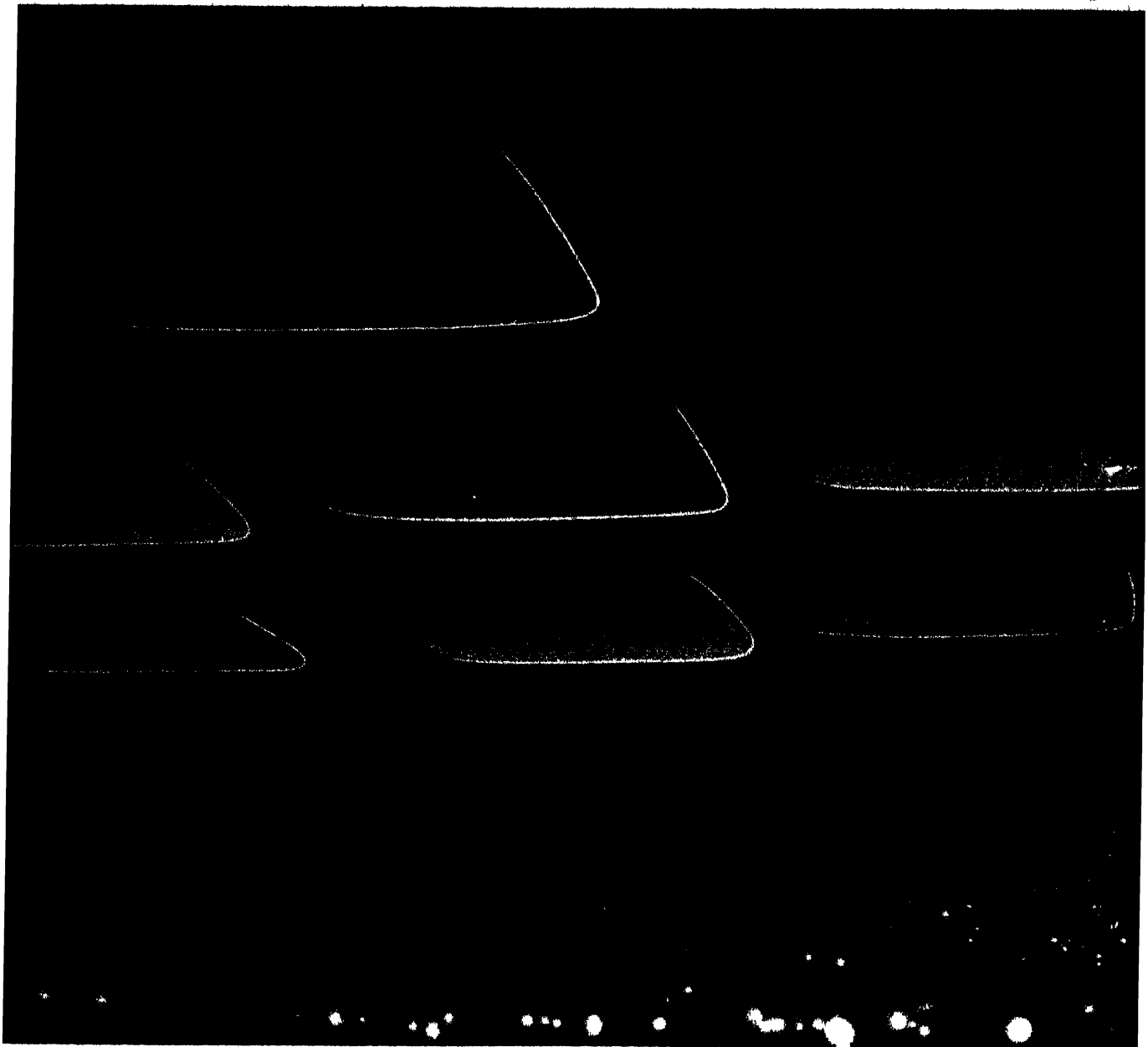


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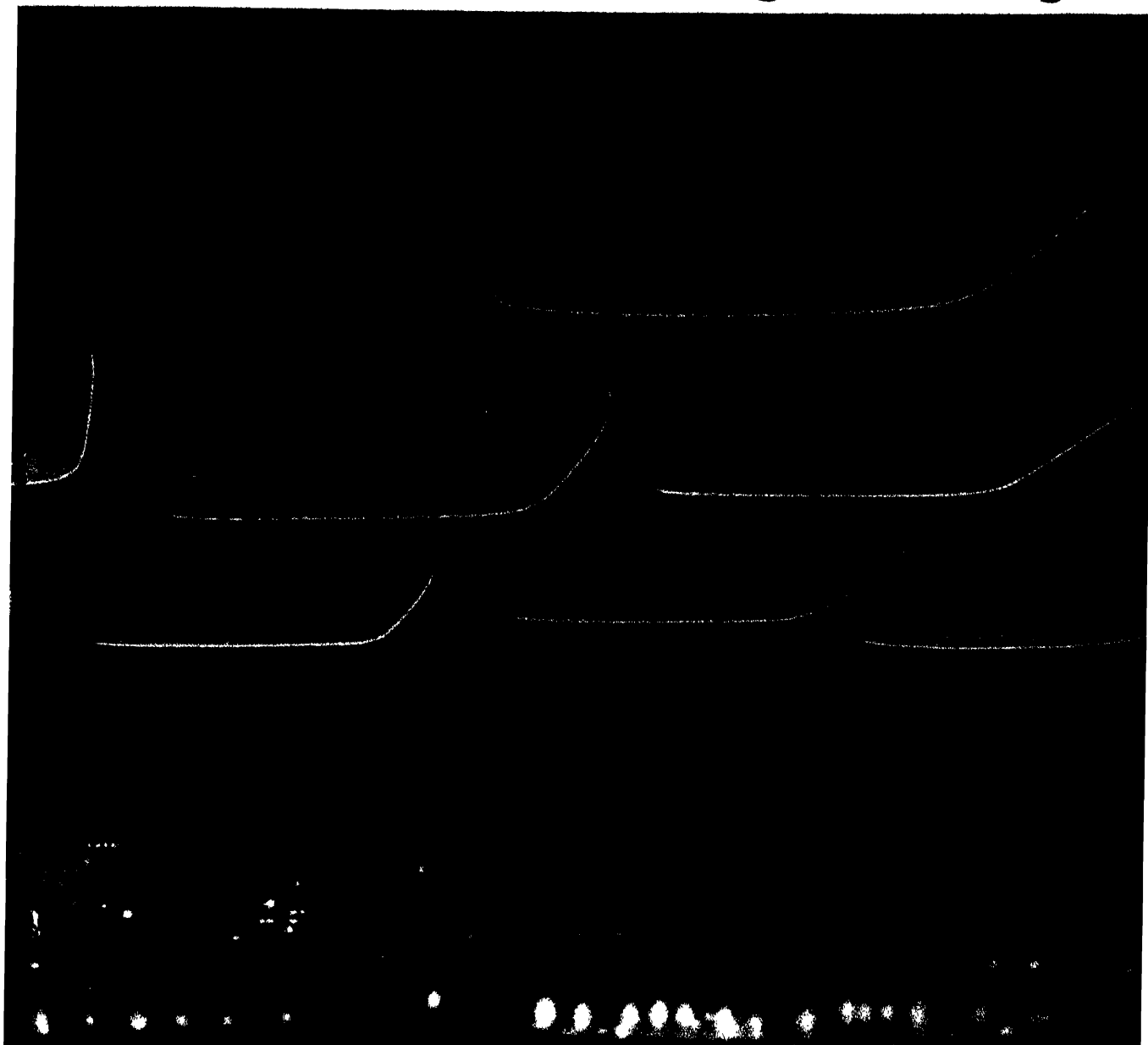
VHF 2 - 12 Ch

AGC: Peak AGC (IF) Reverse AGC (RF)

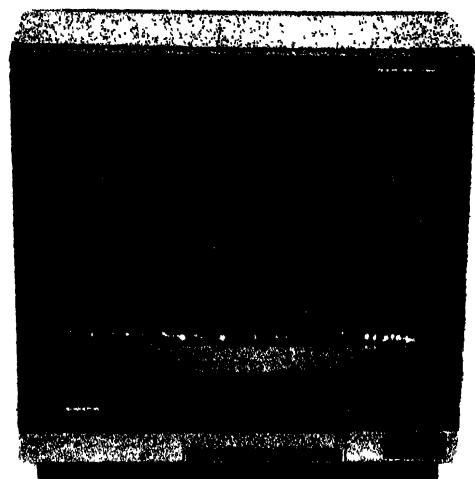
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VARIETY/KHAAS BAAT



Shabana Azmi still in films

Anupam Kher, who took everyone by storm with his brilliant role in *Saai ansh*, is very much in the limelight these days. He is busy signing the best of films by the best of filmmakers and, wonder of wonders, is still a very modest person. The one director who repeats him in all his films is Mahesh Bhatt. Says he, "I have more faith in him than many other actors I have worked with." Now that his career is secure, Kher is also contemplating marriage. Anupam was a divorcee before he made it big. He then fell in love with Kiran Thakur Singh, one of his colleagues from the theatre. The romance, however, didn't last long

and Kiran married a businessman. The marriage lasted for four years during which period Anupam became a star. But then something went wrong with Kiran's marriage, which ended in a divorce.

Now, Anupam is back with Kiran, this time for good. Wedding *shehnais* are going to wait sometime in September, or early October.

Sridevi is apparently sick of the backbiting that goes on in the industry. "They are all very good when they come face to face but change as soon as you turn your back. I know it will take me time to understand things fully but I am not giving up trying." She has also not been able to understand why her sister Srilata has been dragged into all kinds of controversies. "She is an innocent girl whose only crime is that she is my sister and gives me company wherever I go. I am going to stop her from coming with me. Why should she suffer because of me?" she asks.

All talk of *Shabana Azmi* quitting films is 'nonsense' and all talk of her taking up direction is

"so much talk in the air." "I am neck deep in my films as an actress and I don't think I can find time for anything else right now," quips the actress. "Why are people spreading stories about me?"

The only leading actor in Malayalam cinema who projects the modern clad image is young *Rehman* who has now become the rage of Kerala girls. Rehman is now an indispensable part of any Malayalam film, playing either the romantic or tragic hero. The new influx of young heroines is clamouring to cling to him.

Mohan Lal, whose appeal lies in his natural movement and expressions, is trying his best to clinch the top spot where Mammutty is safely ensconced. Mammutty poses a tough challenge for Lal. Mohan Lal fan associations have sprung up in different parts of Kerala.

Sridevi sick of rumours



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**GWALIOR
SUTING** 

The Day BBC Went off the Air

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is forced to obey government strictures

The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) or the 'Voice of Britain' as it is often referred to by its admirers went dead on 7 August. It was on that day that BBC journalists struck work for 24 hours protesting against the interference of the Thatcher government in its editorial policies. Even the rival Independent Television News (ITN) company which would otherwise be ecstatic at the Beebs — as it is sometimes called — agony joined the day long strike in an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity. But the blackout was indeed a very black day for British broadcasting because of the whims and fancies of amateurs

who happen to govern the affairs of the corporation.

The corporation's excellent reputation was dealt a crippling blow by its own board of governors who buckled under the government's pressure. It all started when the British home minister Leon Brittan told the BBC board of governors to scrap a TV documentary entitled *At the edge of the union* scheduled for 7 August. It was to feature an interview with Martin McGuinness who is not only believed to be the chief of staff of the banned Irish Republican Army (IRA) but also an elected member representing the unstratified political wing of the IRA known as Sinn Féin

of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

On Sunday, 28 July one of the 'heavies' sympathetic to the Tories indicated that the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would demand an explanation from the BBC about the interview. The next day Mr Brittan wrote to the chairman of the governors, Stuart Young, asking him to cancel the film allocated for peak viewing time. But the home minister had based his argument on newspaper reports and not on first hand knowledge of the programme's contents. Mr Young and his board immediately sought and obtained a private and exclusive screening of the film and they almost unanimously decided that it was objectionable and fit to be withdrawn. The board then informed Mr Brittan that the programme had been cancelled.

It is arguable whether editorial authority rests with the board of governors or the board of management headed by the director general Alisdair Milne. It has always been assumed, that privilege and control belongs to the latter. And the management, though in the absence of the director general (DG) who was on leave, had unanimously recommended the showing of the programme. Thus, the impression that was created after Mr Young and company caved in was that the Thatcher regime had imposed indirect censorship. Mr Brittan, however, was quick to deny this and even suggested that if the BBC had rejected his request, he would have had no alternative but to accept this situation.

While there is no doubt about the fact that the government wanted to stop the screening of the film, the acceptance of the government strictures by the board of governors is being interpreted as an act of editorial cowardice. John Foster, broadcasting organiser of the National Union of Journalists said: 'If you are to have a democracy then journalists have a role to play which often conflicts with the role which the government wants them to play. It is important if the BBC has a function within British society that it stands up for its editorial integrity.' Mr Merlyn Rees, former Labour home



Margaret Thatcher

SPECIAL REPORT

secretary and Northern Ireland secretary, who strongly supported the telecast of *At the edge of the union* challenged Mr Brittan's contention that the programme had to be scrapped as it would be contrary to national interests. "It is no use shutting our eyes on this side of the Irish sea to the realities of Northern Ireland," he said. A spokesman for the Liberals' Northern Ireland who also vehemently opposed the BBC move to cancel the film said: "It will be a bad day for Britain if we have not the guts to show this programme. I doubt if Mr McGuinness has anything more to say than he has had many opportunities to say already."

The board of management in defence of its stand said that the BBC executives had failed to follow two crucial guidelines on covering terrorism issues. They felt that the terrorists' position had been portrayed too sympathetically.

Citing two allegedly, critical failures in the BBC's process of internal consultations, they said that interviews with people thought to have close terrorist connections need the prior permission of the director-general who has to discuss the issue with the governors. Mr Milne did not learn of the programme until a couple of days before the storm broke out. The board of management also said that the matter should also have been referred to the BBC's then Governor for Northern Ireland, Lady Faulkner, but it was not.



Alasdair Milne



Leon Brittan

BBC executives have, however, maintained that the guidelines were followed "to the last comma and full stop." Besides, it is irrelevant, as far as the public is concerned whether "internal consultations" have taken place in the BBC hierarchy or not. All they are interested in is whether the programme was fair and not contravening any Home Office regulations related to inciting violence.

If Sikh and Kashmiri extremists opposed to India are given the opportunity to air bloodthirsty remarks on British television, with Whitehall turning a Nelson's eye, there is no reason why an Irish revolutionary, who is fighting for the reunification of the two Irelands, not for an independent state of Northern Ireland, should not be permitted to express his views. Especially where the production had been balanced by the exposure given to a hardcore loyalist, Gregory Campbell, who advocated in his answers, a shoot to kill policy against the IRA.

Ashis Ray, London

The New King of the Green Baize

MICHAEL FERREIRA, former amateur billiards title-holder, reports on how Geet Sethi outclassed veteran Subhash Agrawal and legendary Bob Marshall to become the new champion

The 25th world amateur billiards championship drew to a glittering close on 7 August 1985 with the presentation of the awards by the President of India. After two weeks of very high quality billiards, plenty of drama and some razzmatazz which is so necessary if any game is to succeed as a spectacle, a new world champion was crowned at the Durbar Hall of the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi.

Geet Sethi's triumph was the culmination of a mature display of solid, consistent billiards which was remarkable for a 24-year-old. The traditional view held by most billiard pundits was that one's best billiards as an amateur is played after the age of 40. Presumably this is because by

that stage in life, one is expected to have settled down and achieved a personal balance that is indispensable for a game like billiards, which in essence is not a contest against an opponent. Billiards is a battle against the conditions, the balls and oneself. In its purest form, it is a battle which can never really be won for it is a struggle against perfection. However, such a view gained currency when life was different, when the acceptance of anything other than a few shillings towards actual expenses was not only infra dig but almost reprehensible. Today, in billiards as in any other sport, it is impossible to reach the top, or to stay there for that matter, without a support system in the shape of family wealth, or a

benevolent employer, immediate and continuous access to first-class playing facilities and equipment, patronage in the matter of international travel (an area in which Air India has been so very good to us) and the flexibility to travel across continents at short notice for competitive experience.

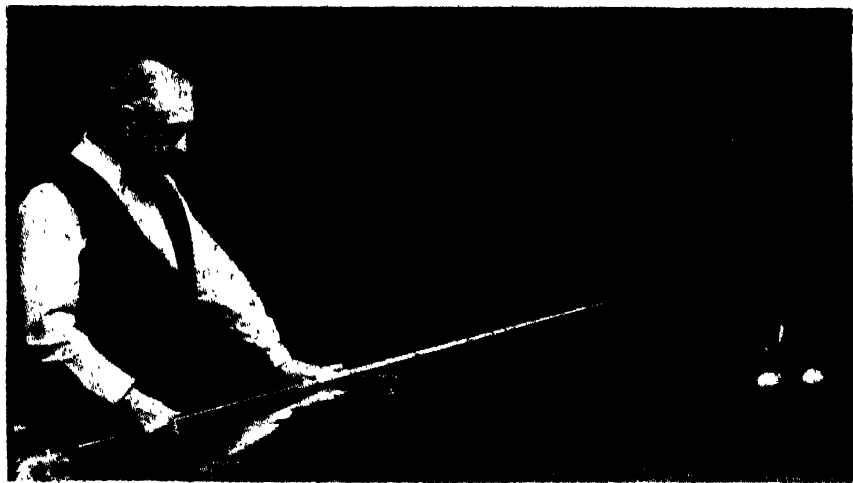
Today, success at the international level brings rewards which are attractive enough to make a young man flog himself to limits unheard of by all but a handful of the old amateurs. Industries in both sectors, who have stepped into the vacuum created by the passing of the erstwhile princely order, do not regard sponsoring a sportsman as a total loss; on the contrary, especially in



Bob Marshall (foreground) and Geet Sethi during the finals: separated by a generation

Jagdish Yadav

SUNDAY SPORTS



(Above and below) The legendary Bob Marshall in action: age was no barrier

the enlightened atmosphere of India today, there is every reason to believe that they regard it as a positive contribution to the prestige of the nation.

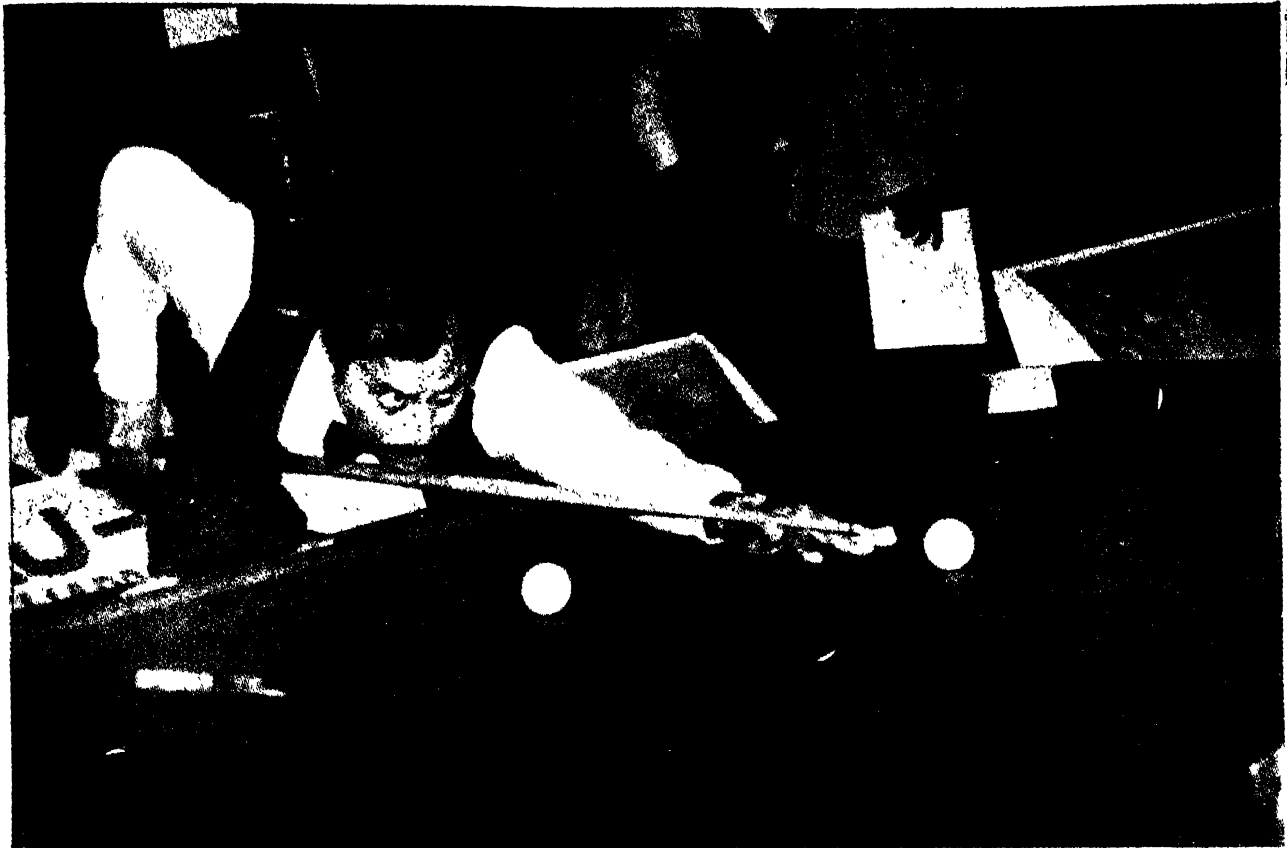
Viewed from this perspective, it is not altogether surprising that Geet Sethi won the world championship at such a young age. His lack of experience, which might have been regarded as a handicap by many, was compensated by his talent. Geet

Sethi has an excellent temperament; his matches against Subhash Agrawal and myself, even if I have not been at my best, bore evidence of this. He comes from a cultured family, which is far more important in this game than many people imagine. If I may say so, like me, he is equally at home in Bombay, Dubai, London, New York or Timbuctoo and would be capable of performing well anywhere without problems of culture shock.

He is truly a product of modern India of whom the whole country can be proud of.

For Subhash Agrawal, this championship must have been a disappointment. In the early stages, his form was brilliant and it seemed that nothing could stop him. I am very proud of my ability, but I have to concede that I will probably never come close to his world record: a four-hour aggregate of 3780 points which is 400 points over my best, which itself was a world record. When Subhash is good, he is very very good, but when he is bad, he is disappointing. Who in his wildest dreams would have imagined that he would go down to Bob Marshall over a six-hour match? But the unbelievable happened. With me, it was the anxiety to play well that caused problems. With Subhash I think it was the feeling, bordering on overconfidence, that all he had to do was to keep his arm moving and the title was his that brought about his downfall. Any player who had been playing like him would have been as complacent but unfortunately things seldom work out that way. His first crisis of confidence came in the league match with Sethi. That night

SUNDAY SPORTS



Michael Ferreira in action during the championship: not a spent force

ure, which had been totally absent against the lesser lights, played havoc with his fluency. Sethi was shaky too, but, as in his match against me, managed to hang on to his composure. The human mind is really strange, and perhaps the seeds of doubt sowed during his encounter with Sethi caused Agrawal to fumble against Marshall. The hope of being, along with younger brother Om, the first brothers to hold the world billiards and snooker titles simultaneously must have also played its subtle part in destroying his mental balance. Subhash's turn will come someday, but it will not be easy if Geet maintains his form. And for those who would like to write me off, a warning: do not ignore me for I am going to roll over and sham dead in future championships. I have got over licking the wounds and am now thirsting for blood. Maybe this loss is the best thing that has happened to me and will shake me out of any complacency that years at the top may have brought about. So Subhash will have to toil hard to achieve his dream and to be fair to him, I am sure he will.

Bob Marshall, the 75-year-old marvel, has laid to rest all doubts regarding his form by faring very well in the

championship. The present generation may not admit it, but he was considered the best amateur ever, with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the game. He had the advantage of watching and playing against the legendary Walter Lindrum, the greatest player the world has ever produced. Walter could have hoisted Wilson Jones, Michael Ferreira, Geet Sethi, Om Agrawal and Subhash Agrawal into his hip pocket and scarcely have felt the difference. Four-figure breaks were a way of life with him—between 1930 to the end of the war he had compiled no fewer than 711 officially documented breaks of over 1000 with a highest of 4137. One opponent had the misfortune of sitting out two breaks of over 3,700 each in consecutive visits. Having lived and played in the same era, Walter left an indelible stamp on Marshall. Unfortunately World War Two took away six prime years of his playing life, otherwise Marshall would surely have won more titles than he did. He regrets the declining standards of the game in Australia and with the support of his third wife (the other two have passed away) was persuaded to play after a 15 year lull so that youngsters could benefit from his knowledge and experience.

The story that he held the cue once again to prevent me from equalling his record of four wins makes good copy, but it happens to be untrue. Everyone was wonder-struck at his will-power and form at this age and I admit that all of us learnt lessons from him.

What happened to Michael Ferreira? Now that I am no longer the champion this question might seem irrelevant to many. In retrospect, I believe that I could not prepare for the championship with the single-mindedness of the previous years. My responsibilities on the domestic front have increased to a degree which only those who are close to me can understand and appreciate. I still put in the hours of work but my attention is divided. The result is that my confidence, which is built upon hours of ruthless concentration, was depleted. This is not an excuse, it is only a dispassionate analysis of what went wrong. I still maintain that I am a better player today than ever before. I am looking forward to the challenges ahead especially for the sake of my family who are, as the coming weeks and months will show, the only true friends and supporters on whom I rely.

PHOTOFEATURE



Indira Gandhi

As seen by RAGHU RAI

These photographs are from *Indira Gandhi* by Raghu Rai and Pupul Jayakar (published by Lustre Press Pvt. Ltd. and distributed by Roli Books International, 4 Ansari Road, New Delhi-2; price Rs 200)





With Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Shimla in 1972 (left) and the King of Tonga (right)



At the Shantivana, with Rajiv Gandhi on Nehru's death anniversary on 27 May 1984



The different moods of Indira Gandhi (anti-clockwise) 18 January 1966, she is flanked by Gulzari Lal Nanda after her election as the Prime Minister; with son Sanjay Gandhi, at the funeral of Sanjay Gandhi and squatting on the lawns of Delhi's Vithalbhai Patel House, annoyed by the unruly behaviour of supporters who mobbed her in the Janata days



Vasant Sathe's *Janvani*

The minister's differences with the Coal India management had led to the government issuing a presidential proclamation to change some board decisions taken in July. The announcement regarding suspension of managers made during a TV programme came at a time when no suspension orders had been issued.

Is *Janvani*, the fortnightly Door-darshan programme in which a minister of the union government answers questions from the general public, a forum to make administrative announcements? It would seem so from the way the minister for steel, mines and coal, Vasant Sathe, announced the suspension of four colliery managers in

Janvani which was telecast on the night of 6 August. The expansion of the television network has taken Door-darshan to homes in the colliery colonies in remote parts of the country. The minister's announcement that he had taken strict action for the supply of poor quality coal and suspended four colliery managers sent shock waves through the 400 col-

lieries managed by Coal India Ltd. (CIL) and its subsidiaries. Till the evening of 6 August, no manager had been suspended. The *Janvani* programme was recorded on 5 August, a day before it was telecast. Apparently the minister had asked the department of coal to order Coal India Ltd. to suspend the four managers before going to the Door-darshan studio, but



Vasant Sathe: using television for policy announcement?

Ashok Bose

till the next day, 6 August, the managers' names had not been communicated to Coal India headquarters in Calcutta by the subsidiaries. The suspension orders, therefore, had not been issued. So, when the Doordarshan network carried Vasant Sathe's message through the length and breadth of the country, panic gripped the entire coal industry. In the eyes of the workers, all the 400 colliery managers were suspect. Little did the colliery managers know that only one per cent of their total strength had fallen victim to the ministerial order. It took quite a few days for the confusion to clear. Communications between Coal India headquarters and the headquarters of the subsidiary companies, at Santoria (Asansol), Dhanbad, Nagpur and Ranchi are poor. The situation is worse when it comes to telephone links between the headquarters of the subsidiaries and the collieries which are even poorer. Due to lack of effective communications, the confusion created by the Janvani announcement was immense.

Complaints had been received from the power houses about the poor quality of coal supplied by the Coal India subsidiaries. Payments for coal supplies had been held up in many cases due to poor quality coal. On enquiries, two mines of the Central Coalfields Ltd., Jagannath and K D Haslong, a mine of the Western Coalfields Ltd., New Majri, and Kamankhali colliery of the Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. had been identified as the sources of poor quality coal. The minister while announcing that the managers had been suspended had these mines in his mind. But till a suspension order is communicated to the concerned person and alternate arrangements are made regarding his charge, is it desirable that ministerial announcements should be made on television?

Ironically, just a few months earlier Vasant Sathe had interceded and got the suspension order of a Coal India manager rescinded. The president of the Coal Mines Officers' Association of India (CMOAI), I B Pandey, has been placed under suspension by the erstwhile chairman of Coal India, M S Gujral. The charge against Pandey was that in a memorandum to the minister he had made some allegations against the management of Coal India. Among other things, Pandey had alleged that Coal India had two million tonnes of fake stocks due to over-reporting of production. M S Gujral's administration asked Pandey to prove his charge. After waiting for ten days, Gujral placed the officer under suspension



M S Gujral differences with yet another minister

because he had not been able to substantiate the allegations made by him in the petition to the minister. Vasant Sathe's office communicated to Coal India that an officer submitting a petition to a minister did not amount to misconduct.



Coal miners at work

The relationship between minister Sathe and chairman Gujral (who retired on 25 July) had soured to such an extent that a week before Gujral's retirement, the department of coal flew in an additional secretary to the government to Calcutta with a presidential order in hand to reverse certain decisions taken by the Coal India management. Coal India annually buys equipment worth Rs 400 crores. A tender for drills (value of the contract Rs 16 crores) floated by Coal India created bad blood between the minister's office and the management of Coal India. The board of directors of Coal India had decided to split the order in a certain ratio amongst four parties: Rewari, CP, Heavy Engineering Corporation, IMP and Ingersoll Rand. The ministry wanted the order to be split up in a different ratio. When persuasion failed, the extreme step of getting a presidential order (which is binding on public sector undertakings) issued was taken. Presidential orders are rarely issued. And the situation created by the differences between Sathe and Gujral was extraordinary. After Gujral's retirement, the post of chairman is lying vacant. G L Tandon of Neyveli Lignite, who was named as his successor, has been unable to join in Calcutta due to poor health. In the meantime, heads have rolled in the headless company and the electronic media has been used to announce the minister's order.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

ASSAM

Giving Peace a Chance

The Assam problem is nearing an end

Prafulla Mohanto and Bhriku Phukan, the two leaders of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) were hardly expecting the kind of reception they got from their followers on their arrival from New Delhi. It certainly was not a hero's welcome. Breaking security rules, an excited Lalit Rajkhowa, a top aide, ran on to the tarmac to seek an explanation from AASU president Mohanto and secretary Phukan even before they had stepped out of the Indian Airlines Boeing at Guwahati's Borjhor airport on the afternoon of 8 August. The AASU supporters and executive members were excited about a report which said that their president and the secretary had accepted 1971 as the cut-off year during their talks with the union home minister S.B. Chavan in Delhi the previous day. Even as they waited at the airport lounge to receive their leaders, the AASU supporters discussed among themselves how even Prafulla Mohanto and Bhriku Phukan with all their clout could not strike such a deal.

Lalit Rajkhowa who has participated in past negotiations as an AASU representative along with Mohanto and Phukan insisted that 1971 would never be acceptable to the 45-member AASU executive committee which, in its last meeting, had resolved that there could be no compromise on the cut-off year beyond 1965. The executive committee, in fact, refused Mohanto and Phukan the authority that they had sought before they left for Delhi to discuss the cut-off date, if necessary to reach an accord with the centre. So Rajkhowa broke the security cordon to find out the truth. For the first time in many years, AASU supporters did not greet Mohanto and Phukan with the customary *Jai Aui Ashom* slogan when they entered the arrival lounge. The slogans were raised only after the leaders had clarified that they had not agreed to 1971 as cut-off year nor said so to the press.

As Mohanto and Phukan drove towards Guwahati university to the AASU headquarters, their supporters commandeered an Assam State Transport bus to follow them to the campus for a fuller version of the New Delhi talks. Sensing the mood, the AASU leaders postponed the

executive committee meeting scheduled for 3.00pm to the next day and held a press conference to announce that there would be no compromise on the cut-off year. At the time, they appeared confident of signing an agreement with the centre to end the six years of unrest in Assam.

Union home minister S.B. Chavan, camping at a government guest house a few kilometres away, sounded equally optimistic as he met a stream of visitors to gauge their feelings. Chavan had flown into Dispur in a BSF aircraft shortly before noon and in the next 12 hours met about 80 groups of people representing various organisations including opposition parties as well as his own party—the Congress(I) and gave them a wholly different version of the deal. He insisted that 1971 would be the cut-off year and not 1965 which the AASU was claiming. He added that the centre might meet other AASU demands halfway by replacing the present Congress(I) government elected in 1983 by a caretaker government headed by the present chief minister, Hiteswar Saikia.

For a time it appeared that reaching an agreement between the AASU and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) which have been spearheading the anti-immigrant agitation in Assam since 1979 and the centre was an impossible task. But things started falling into place on 9 August 1985, after the executive committees of AASU and the AAGSP were briefed by their negotiators on the possible outlines of an agreement

S.B. Chavan: successful



with the centre. It was soon evident that neither side had been exact in their interpretations of the truce terms.

The final agreement, in all probability, will not specify a cut-off year and be so phrased as to give both sides an opportunity to declare victory. The AASU and the AAGSP which started their agitation demanding 1951 as the cut-off year and had till recently been demanding the expulsion of all immigrants settled in Assam after 1961 have now agreed to accept those people who have immigrated till the end of 1965. The final agreement will include provisions for detection and prosecution of illegal immigrants under the existing legal framework and various international conventions, practices and commitments. This crucial clause can be interpreted both ways: it can mean having 1966 as the cut-off year and it can also mean accepting 1971.

In return for the defranchisement of illegal immigrants and certain statutory safeguards against future settlements in the state, AASU and AAGSP have agreed not to press for the deportation of unauthorised migrants. The final agreement may also contain certain specific provisions for curbing trans-border migration and economic assistance from the centre. And when AASU and AAGSP negotiators left Guwahati on Sunday 11 August for the crucial and final round of talks, first with home minister S.B. Chavan where they received a draft of the agreement for their comments and then with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi, they were confident that the centre would revise its ideas about having a caretaker government after the dissolution of the state Assembly and agree to a spell of Presidential rule as demanded by them.

It was not surprising that when Rajiv Gandhi arrived in Guwahati on 6 August for just about an hour to take part in his party's centenary celebrations in Assam, the mood of the people in the capital was visibly relaxed and even cheerful. A sense of expectancy and relief was evident throughout the state.

Prafulla Mohanto and Bhriku Phukan, who have been participating in the talks with the centre since 1980 feel that an agreement could not be reached earlier because, in the past, the centre spoke in many voices and was not serious about an accord. "This time," they said "it was different." But both AASU and the AAGSP are weaker today having failed to achieve much by their agitations which had often been bloody and

violent. More important, the present AASU leadership, which was elected in 1979 for a term of only one year has been continuing in office for six years, much to the resentment of their younger colleagues who are feeling thwarted. Many prominent members have left the party during the last six years but the union government felt that they could strike a better deal with the present leadership of the AASU and the AAGSP rather than with their successors who were an unknown quantity.

These compulsions brought the two sides closer with the centre hurrying for an accord before the mon-

soon session of the Parliament ends on 23 August. Indeed, the session would have ended on 19 August but for certain legislation which have to be pushed through Parliament to give legitimacy to the anticipated agreement. Barring a last-minute hitch, an accord is all but a formality. The hardliners in the Assam movement however feel that the agreement is no solution to Assam's agonies. Atul Bora, a former AASU general secretary and till last year one of the convenors of the AAGSP says: "AASU leaders have betrayed our trust and shifted their burdens on to the future generation."

Tooshar Pandit, Guwahati

ANDHRA PRADESH

Friends or Foes?

NTR softens towards Congress(I)

After moving out of the opposition camp, chief minister N.T. Rama Rao now seems to be moving closer to the Congress(I), despite his assertions that the Telugu Desam is an opposition party. Of late, there has been a strange rapprochement between the two parties. There had been a number of indications of NTR moving closer to the ruling party, when the centre took prompt steps to abolish the upper house in the state according to the Andhra Pradesh CM's wishes.

The CM made a special trip to Delhi to congratulate Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his successful tour abroad. However, it was during the Prime Minister's recent one-day trip to Hyderabad, when the reversal of NTR's earlier anti-Congress(I) attitude was most evident. Even during the Congress(I) sponsored Andhra Pradesh *bandh* to protest against the attack on harijans by upper caste landlords in Karamchedu village where five harijans were killed, the

state government cooperated with the Congress(I) to make the *bandh* a success. All government offices with the exception of the state secretariat were closed. State road transport buses remained off the roads as well. In fact, the state government made no effort to foil the *bandh* and the cordial relations between the Congress(I) and the Telugu Desam ensured that there were no unruly clashes of the sort that usually mar a *bandh* sponsored by a rival political party. All shops and other establishments remained closed and vehicles flying Congress(I) flags roamed the streets without any sign of retaliation or obstruction from the Telugu Desam party workers.

At the inauguration of the new Legislative Assembly building NTR, eulogised the Prime Minister profusely and presented him a wood carving of Lakshmi as an offering of the love and affection of the six crore Telugu people. NTR, in fact, went a step further and said that the Prime

Minister was a symbol of youth power in the country. Later, with a curious mix of chaste, high flown Hindi and colloquialism accompanied with his inimitable gestures, NTR told Rajiv Gandhi: "Is desh ki croreon bhuki, nangi janata aap ki taraf tukur tukur kar dekh rahi hai (the starving millions of this country look towards you with a lot of hope)."

Even at the airport during the ceremonial welcome to the Prime Minister who drove out in an open jeep to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd waiting outside the airport, NTR stood behind him. This was in direct contrast to the reception NTR had got in 1983, during Mrs Indira Gandhi's first visit to the state after the Telugu Desam had formed its government. At that time NTR had attempted to clamber on to the jeep with Mrs Gandhi but he had been rudely elbowed out.

The Karamchedu incident and the state Congress(I)'s reaction to it led to a moment of discord, but after the morale-boosting *bandh* sponsored by the Congress(I), the party is now slowly easing off the pressure on the Telugu Desam government on the Karamchedu issue. The Congress(I) was quick to deny any room for speculation about its moving a no-confidence motion against NTR in the budget session of the Legislative Assembly starting on 12 August. Initially NTR had written a letter of protest to the Prime Minister regarding what he termed the "provocative comments and insulting behaviour" of the union home minister (of state), Mrs Ramdulari Sinha, who had been deputed by the PM to visit the Karamchedu village.

But NTR for whom Telugu *Atma-gauravam* (self respect) and opposition to the centre's intervention in the activities of the state were the main planks on which he had contested the 1983 polls, has not made an issue of the insult to his home ministry. Even while newsmen asked the Prime Minister at Begumpet airport, about the report that the parliamentary secretary Oscar Fernandes was to submit on Mrs Ramdulari Sinha's alleged remarks, NTR had no comments. He only smiled.

Many sections in the state have found NTR's "over-courteous" reception to the Prime Minister to be distasteful. The BJP state unit president P.V. Chalapathi Rao said that there was a difference between maintaining cordial relations and bowing and bending before the Prime Minister. Some others remarked that NTR was going "the MGR way."

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

NTR (right) welcoming Rajiv Gandhi during his recent visit



CIVIL AVIATION

The Flight of an Airline

British Airways pulls out of Calcutta airport

A 52 year old friendship died when on 5 August British Airways (BA) announced the withdrawal of its sole weekly flight from Calcutta from 1 December 1965. The sudden announcement caught everyone unawares and even West Bengal's chief minister Jyoti Basu did not have anything to say when David Reynolds, the manager of BA in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka called to formally inform him of the decision. The CM later said that he did not understand why BA had taken such a decision and the news was written to the PM to protest at the withdrawal.

Mr Reynolds on his part said that BA was going to shift its flight from Calcutta to Bombay not because business was bad but because it was better in Bombay. According to the

airline's bilateral agreement with Air India, it can operate only 14 flights in India. He also told reporter that BA would not fly to Calcutta even if the airline's quota was increased, perhaps to suggest that business in Calcutta can never be viable. However, V K Anand, the general manager of the International Airports Authority of India (IAAI) in Calcutta told *STANDARD* that the growth rate of international air traffic in Calcutta airport was the highest in the country—16.8 per cent (during 1964-65) against Delhi's 3.9 per cent and Bombay's 2.8 per cent during the same period. BA operates flight every day from Delhi and six days a week from Bombay.

The BA employees' union and the BA employees' association, in a letter to Jyoti Basu, said that the airline's

earnings in Calcutta had more than doubled this year. According to them, the earnings last June, was £220,000 against £104,000 in June the previous year. They even claimed that there was over booking in Calcutta on some days during the last few weeks. It is believed, the "occupancy" rate in city is quite satisfactory. "The company had always done well in Calcutta," said a travel agent who did not wish to be named. In fact, in Calcutta, BA even managed business for other companies like Cathay Pacific and Qantas, as well as the operations of the Royal Air Force Asia's largest catering service centre (for 40 passengers) that was closed 15 years ago for inexplicable reasons. This was also run by BA in Calcutta.

Why then did the BA decide to move out? Was it due to the running battle between the centre and the West Bengal government which have, in the past, accused each other of being responsible for the withdrawal of the several airlines from the city? From 1933, before the inception of the Calcutta airport, the British Airways (or its predecessors, the BOAC and the Imperial Airways, which incidentally, had Rabindra

in Calcutta along with the other passengers) had been an integral part of the air transport industry in the city. The company then operated the *Empress of India* which used to land on the dock at Bally (a Calcutta suburb).

When the BA proposes to take care of its passengers from Calcutta by an arrangement with the Indian Airlines, it may not be able to do the same for the 34 members of its staff plummeting from 321 in 1963 in the city. The staff are apprehensive because their company is well within its legal rights to retrench them.

When BA has called it a day in Calcutta, its place has been taken primarily by the Aeroflot (the Soviet airline) which operates the maximum number of flights from Calcutta apart from Bangladesh Biman. Thai Airways, Druk Air (the Bhutanese airline) and LOT (the Polish airline which has recently announced its decision to fly in Calcutta) are among the few others who operate from the city. Strangely, Air India does not have an international flight from Calcutta. This is why the withdrawal of BA which had been the status symbol of the airport—as an airline that stood by when so many others had left—acquires added importance. Already, it is being said that Thai Airways has decided to follow suit.

Rudranath Sanyal, Calcutta

An Imperial Airways plane named S8 "Calcutta" moored on the Thames at Westminster in London in 1928 and inside, BA employees in Calcutta observing a silent protest



PRICE RISE

Ministers under Fire

V.P. Singh and Rao Birendra Singh are criticised



While the common man feels the pinch of rising prices when he goes to buy his monthly provisions union finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh and food and civil supplies minister Rao Birendra Singh felt it inside Parliament House in New Delhi. Ever since the monsoon session commenced on 23 July, the two ministers have had a difficult time both in Parliament and in the Congress(I) party forum where they have been repeatedly grilled.

Frayed tempers were visible even on 22 July when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi addressed the customary session eve meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party. As soon as the expected accolades over the Prime Minister's foreign tours were over, several members raised the price rise issue. Rajiv Gandhi appreciated the concern of the members and asked the finance minister to reply.

What followed was unbelievable to some of the older members. The finance minister, the *de facto* number two of the cabinet, was just not allowed to speak. The members repeatedly interrupted him, ridiculing and even heckling him for his claims

that the rise in prices had not been steep and that its rate had in fact been the lowest in the last seven years. Since there was very little time as most of it was taken up by laudatory resolutions about the Prime Minister's foreign visits abroad, it was decided that there would be a lengthier discussion on the issue the next week.

V.P. Singh circulated a lengthy letter to all Congress(I) members of Parliament explaining the cause of rising prices of some commodities, enumerating the steps that the government had taken so far and soliciting their views on further steps that would be required to control the upward trend. The finance minister's letter had been carefully drafted. 'I share the concern of the members about prices. This is what affects the voters directly and whatever else we may or may not do if prices are rising (the) government is bound to come in for criticism. It is therefore essential that we collectively apply our minds and see what can be done to restrain the price increase,' Singh stated.

What followed left the members highly dissatisfied and angry. V.P.

Singh quoted a plethora of statistics and repeated that the escalation was not as great as it was being made out to be, except in some commodities like sugar and gur. The main problem with sugar was that there had been a steep increase in its internal consumption from 32 lakh tonnes in 1979-80 and 64 lakh tonnes in 1982-83 to 83 lakh tonnes in 1984-85, said Singh. Added to this were the sharp decline in production from 82 lakh tonnes in 1982-83 to 59 lakh tonnes last year and a slight recovery in the current year with production of 62 lakh tonnes. The government's efforts to meet this shortage by importing about 20 lakh tonnes have been nullified by hoarding consumer preference for indigenous sugar in certain areas, particularly the north and the delay in lifting of sugar by state governments.

The finance minister has shrewdly passed on the blame to the others. While blackmarketing can be only handled by the minister of food and civil supplies, Rao Birendra Singh, the problem of consumer preference is not his fault. However, the suggestion by V.P. Singh which implied that the state governments were indirectly helping the blackmarketeers by not lifting sugar all tied to them, angered members of the Congress(I), the most as a majority of the states in the country are ruled by the Congress(I).

What angered them further was V.P. Singh's later submission that as far as the prices of rice, wheat and edible oils were concerned, the government was not in favour of lowering the prices as it would hurt the farmer and prove a disincentive to production. In the case of edible oil, Singh told members the government had to intervene in the current financial year and buy nearly 75,000 tonnes from the market to ensure that prices did not fall further and that remunerative prices to the farmers were maintained.

But Singh himself admitted that prices of edible oils shot up by almost seven per cent in just one week in the month of July.

All these arguments submitted along with a plethora of statistics and graphs had left the members smarting. When the Congress(I) met for a more thorough discussion on 29 July, the members strongly criticised both V.P. Singh and Rao Birendra Singh. They told the ministers that they were not interested in their statistics and their only interest was ensuring that the common man was able to buy his basic necessities. The figures provided by the ministers were also attacked with members pointing out that they referred to wholesale

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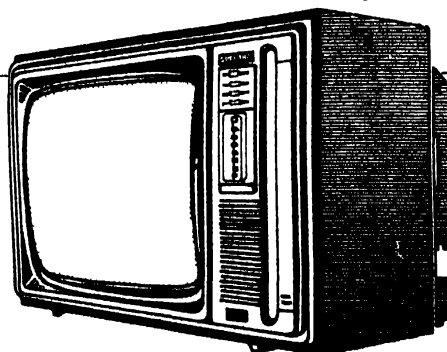
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prices and not retail prices. Particularly critical were CPP(I) secretary K K Tiwari, Moolchand Daga and Gouri Shankar Rajhans. These members were equally critical in the Lok Sabha too.

The finance minister tried to save the situation by yet another letter, a personal address to the MPs in his own handwriting, once again sharing the members' concern and adding that "given a good monsoon" the government could keep the price situation under control. The Congress MPs once again, were not satisfied.

Political observers in the capital see more to the attacks on the finance minister (the attack on Rao Birendra Singh is coincidental they say) than meets the eye. While not doubting the uniform concern felt over spiralling prices since the presentation of the last budget, they feel that this issue is being used to settle political scores. The observers are wondering whether minister of state for power Arun Nehru is orchestrating the attacks. Nehru they feel is a strong rival of the finance minister in his bid to gain control of the Uttar Pradesh Con-

gress(I) and since V P Singh cannot be attacked on personal grounds for his integrity it is his performance that they are attacking. Others wonder whether the attacks are a prelude to a cabinet reshuffle, with the ministers who have been attacked for their performance likely to be shifted from their portfolios.

There are others who suggest that the intra party criticism of the ministers is merely symptomatic of a new era in the Congress(I) where a democratic temper is being revived. They quote in this regard the Prime Minister's tribute to the assassinated trade union leader and MP Lalit Maken where Mr Gandhi praised him for his fearless criticism of the government. Obviously, one of the Congress members in Parliament also believe this. For members who were just not willing to give out details of the discussions in the CPP(I) till recently have after Rajiv Gandhi's tribute to Lalit Maken come out with requests that their names in the list of the 'also spoke fearlessly' should be included in reports filed by the parliament.

S. Vijay, New Delhi

the two demands

It is apparent that with the talks fast reaching an end, Laldenga is keen to ensure a collective responsibility for its success or failure. Perhaps, this explains why he is taking the MNF headquarters, which commands about 300 armed activists, into confidence. He is also anxious to know the possible reaction of the hardliners, led by "colonel" Lalrawna, to any peaceful settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution. It is feared that Lalrawna, the commander of the tactical headquarters of the rebels at Chhipui on the Chittagong Mizoram border, may break off from Laldenga if the rebel leader makes too many concessions to the centre. But during his short trip to Mizoram in June, Lalrawna had assured the Mizoram agricultural minister C L Ruala that he would always be loyal to Laldenga. Laldenga faces a major dilemma. He has to frame his demands within the structure of the Indian Constitution and yet show to the long suffering Mizos that he has been able to wrest a number of benefits for them from the centre. This is perhaps the reason why Laldenga has kept his demands high. Said a union home ministry source at Aizawl: "We have already allowed a sense of victory to Laldenga by agreeing to his demand that the Mizoram state, the provision for which is to be included in the proposed peace accord, will be like any other state in the Indian union and not like Nagaland where the Governor has special power for the maintenance of law and order in view of the lingering insurgency conditions there."

Laldenga on the other hand has dropped some of his key demands, including the abolition of the autonomous district councils for the minority Buddhist Chakmas in south Mizoram, a separate flag and constitution for Mizoram and the formation of greater Mizoram by amalgamating the Mizo inhabited contiguous areas in Assam, Tripura and Manipur. Regarding the demand for a High Court, Mt. Thankima told SUNDAY, "This is an emotive issue to the Mizos, who had to face many problems in the past while filing human rights case in the Guwahati High Court, located 400 km away." Laldenga has pointed out to G Parthasarathy chairman of the policy planning committee in the external affairs ministry and the centre's chief negotiator with the rebel leader, that the centre should not ignore Article 241(I) of the Constitution which provides for the establishment of a High Court in each state. Said

MIZORAM

A Farewell to Arms

A few minor issues remain to be settled

The peace talk between Laldenga, the chief of the banned Mizo National Front (MNF) and the centre have now reached a crucial stage. While the major issues have been sorted out amicably, the former rebel chief is insisting on the settlement of two minor demands: the setting up of a High Court in Aizawl and the exclusive trading rights for the people of Mizoram. The centre has refused to accept both the demands, bringing in an element of uncertainty in the talks.

There are also indications that the Congress(I) in Mizoram will oppose the arrangement by way of which Laldenga has reportedly been given the prerogative of choosing his own team of advisers to help the Governor of the proposed state of Mizoram run the administration during the interim period between the dissolution of the Assembly and fresh elections. It has already been agreed that the 58 year old Laldenga will head the advisory council.

With the talks yet to be concluded, Laldenga is now waiting for information from his MNF headquarters in the Chittagong Hills Tract in Bang-

ladesh. The two aides of the rebel leader, the chief of the MNF army, brigadier general, Thankima and the deputy minister, Phinkima, reached the headquarters on 1 August to meet MNF vice president Zorinhang and his 11 colleagues from the executive council regarding



Laldenga making peace

the rebel chief, "When you have pledged to grant us full statehood, you cannot afford to tinker with our rights guaranteed under the statehood provisions."

The talks, which began in 1976 after Laldenga's arrival in New Delhi, are likely to be resumed soon after the return to the capital of the two aides from the headquarters in late August. Vice-president Zoramthanga is expected to accompany the aides to Delhi to participate in the

next round of discussions. His presence will definitely be welcomed by the centre as he is keen on ending the 19-year-old insurgency movement and may not like the talks to flounder because of some minor points of difference.

The composition of the advisory council will, however, prove to be a thorny issue. Said a top Mizoram Pradesh Congress(I) Committee source, "Since it will be a coalition of the MNF and the Congress(I), we

should have equal rights to appoint our respective nominees on it. How can we agree to Laldenga's plea that he should be allowed to choose his nominees from our party?" Meanwhile, Mizoram chief minister Lalthanhawla has told SUNDAY that he would not mind joining the council and working under his one-time mentor, Laldenga, if the party high command desires.

Santanu Ghosh, Shcher

COIN SHORTAGE

Coupons: The Next BEST Thing

On 28 July, 1984 the then governor of the Reserve Bank, Dr Manmohan Singh had said that in six months the coin shortage would cease as production would be doubled. Many others including the former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee had made similar promises. But not even Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi believed them and he even joked about it at the inauguration of the golden jubilee year of the Reserve Bank in Bombay on 31 May this year. Mr Gandhi was to be given a set of special coins during the function, when, through a slip, the organisers skipped the presentation of coins and went on to the next programme. The PM who was following the programme closely, beckoned the organisers and drew their attention evoking much laughter, as they quickly presented him with the commemoration coins. Mr Gandhi also quipped at the end of the speech that he had thought it was a part of the coin shortage.

Life has become miserable for the common man who requires 50 paise and 25 paise coins for his daily needs. Surprisingly, it is not the Reserve Bank but the Bombay

Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST), that has come to his rescue. BEST bus coupons are being converted to legal tender and used by the smallest *paanwalas* and grocers as well as big stores like Kemp's at the Taj Mahal hotel.

In January last year, the bus coupons were printed only for use in buses as substitute for small change and these were valid for only three months. Said the BEST chairman, P.B. Kerkar, "The undertaking has printed bus coupons worth Rs 4,26,00,000 and sold bus coupons worth Rs 4,07,62,335 till 31 March 1985. The undertaking incurred an expenditure of about Rs 2,93,800 per month towards printing and distribution of bus coupons." Mr Kerkar said that it was done as a temporary measure because of the additional hardships faced by bus conductors and cash counting staff in handling and maintaining accounts of tiny bus coupons.

However, the shortage continues and against the daily requirement of small coins worth Rs 75,000, the undertaking receives small coins

worth Rs 11,500 from the Reserve Bank and Rs 6,500 from the conductor's daily collections. In March 1981, when the situation was normal, the Reserve Bank was supplying every week, coins worth Rs 17,500 in ten paise and five paise denominations while the BEST's requirement was for Rs 15,000 worth of ten paise and Rs 9,500 worth of five paise coins. By August 1981 the supply started going down and has been reduced to a trickle.

Incidentally, each conductor deals with 600 to 700 commuters daily and all conductors together deal with 38 lakh passengers in Bombay, daily. While there is no official count of the number of coupons being used as legal tender by persons other than the BEST bus commuters, a rough estimate is that, at least coupons worth Rs one crore, if not more, are being used by taxi drivers, shopkeepers and the general public.

Neither the Reserve Bank nor the finance ministry are worried about this and nor has any citizen challenged the use of such coupons as legal tender. A year after the former Reserve Bank governor promised that the coin shortage would be over in six months, the government of India is thinking about importing 2,000 million coins in three denominations, worth Rs 143.74 crores, at the cost of Rs 75 crores. These will come from South Korea and the UK. Though the three mints in India are targeted to produce 2,000 million coins, a 33 per cent shortfall is expected by the end of the year because the mints will not be able to deliver the goods. The Reserve Bank had indentured for 2,050 million pieces but production is expected to be just 1,450 million pieces.

Olga Tellez, Bombay.



Rajiv Gandhi (right) and Janardhan Poojary with the RBI golden jubilee commemoration coins

BIHAR

Exploits of a "Mad" Officer

A subdivisional officer is transferred

There are psychiatrists who believe that the Russian priest Rasputin was susceptible to bouts of mental illness, a hypothesis which a large number of historians agree on. Ram Das Jaiswal who lasted 11 days as the subdivisional officer (SDO) of Khunti, a town 30 km from Ranchi is probably in the same boat. Though small in number compared to Rasputin's devotees, the controversial officer too has managed to build up a following. His devotees insist that Jaiswal is an honest and unconventional officer and provincial interest groups are spreading rumours about his mental health in order to discredit him.

However far-fetched the contention may sound, especially, in view of his abrasive statements, the SDO's followers do have a point. He has earned praise when he criticised lawyers and called them dishonest. He also evoked simple punishment for petty crimes. While the law laid down elaborate procedures to deal with these issues, the SDO merely involved parties to hold their hands and do sit-ups. Others were threatened and then asked to sue each other in the court.

The righteous note set by the officer who threatened to take action against corrupt officers led to a note in local newspapers which stated that the officer was actually a reformer. Another newspaper said that the SDO had evolved a new

method of speedily disposing of cases. But the lawyers of Khunti were not amused. The officer had not disposed of the cases, they pointed out, but had merely dropped them without hearing the arguments and following the set procedures. The lawyers then boycotted the SDO's court and filed a complaint with the deputy commissioner of Ranchi.

The government was aware of Mr Jaiswal's 'abnormal' behaviour. After beginning his career in the Bihar Civil Service in the early Sixties, Ram Das Jaiswal was repeatedly suspended and made to hold unimportant posts. Few people took him very seriously and he was usually described as a 'mad cap'. His posting as the subdivisional officer of Khunti in July was his first important posting. The post is a sensitive one as Khunti still happens to be the nerve centre of the Jharkhand movement. It lies in the restive tribal heartland and has recently been in the news because of the protests against the 100-acre Koel Karo hydel project which remains stalled for the last ten years. The chief minister of Bihar, Biju Patnaik, had been impressed by the need for posting a young, honest and dynamic officer at Khunti and he made it known that he had selected one of the 12 young IAS officers who joined the Bihar cadre recently to be posted there. Even after Jaiswal was finally posted, local officials informed the government

about their reservations on the officer. Thus it took Jaiswal ten days before he finally assumed charge. He lasted in his post for barely ten days.

What finally tilted the scale against the officer were his strange declarations. He claimed that he had been sent to protect Hinduism and being more powerful than Hitler and Mussolini, he would wipe out all other religions. He also added that he was destined to be the next Prime Minister of the country. During his stint as SDO, he walked into a church and demanded that he be converted into a Christian. Worse was to follow. When a Christian tribal girl, who had been burnt and driven out of her home, went to the SDO for help, the officer offered to marry her.

Even after the government order asking him to relinquish charge and report to Patna was handed over to him, he refused to vacate his chamber until he received the proper government notification. Shocked by his transfer, Mr Jaiswal publicly recited aloud verses from the *Ram Charit Manas* and *Hanuman Chalisa* while a number of armed policemen sat quietly and listened to his recitals. Finally, Jaiswal broke down and apologised to the journalists present who were almost immediately afterwards roundly abused by him. Jaiswal's younger brother and two of his sisters in law died in an accident two years ago. Could this be the reason for his abnormal behaviour? But if the Bihar government was aware of Jaiswal's mental health why was he appointed SDO of Khunti? Or is it that the government does not keep any record of their officers?

Uttam Sengupta, Ranchi



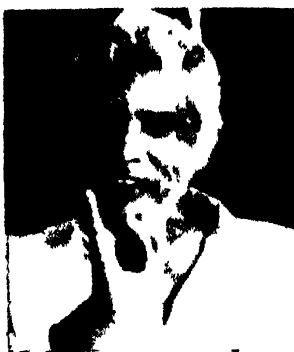
Mr Jaiswal (left) with his successor J. Kumar



Jaiswal with students of his Vedic School which he ran in his house

Pride of the Poor

In 1951, he came to the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, with his family, six lepers and a cow, after renouncing a luxurious life and tearing up his licence to practise law. What was a patch of wasteland was converted into a base for social reform. Anandwan, set up by Baba Murlidhar Amte, became a haven for lepers and the destitute. His was a relentless battle against social evils, be it improving the lot of four million leprosy victims in the country or giving a new lease of life to the tribals. It was from here that Baba Amte vehemently criticised the government's decision to construct two dams in the heartland of Maharashtra which would have rendered more than



Baba Amte missionary

75,000 Adivasis homeless. The battle of the septuagenarian Gandhian, whose creed has been "charity destroys, work builds," is not without its rewards: he was recently awarded the Ramon Mag Sanyas Award for public service. He was also the recipient of the Indira Gandhi Peace Award for 1985.



Lt Col Kapoor soldiering on

Mr Boss

He is a man with a finger in every pie. From the battle arena to the tinsel town of Bombay may be a strange change of scene for some, but not for Lt Colonel Raj Kapoor. His film career started soon after he resigned from the army and stormed into old friend Raj Khosla's office. Khosla, who has directed many films, had little choice but to give Kapoor a role in one of his films. Since then, he has worked in over a dozen films including *Qurbani*, and *Dard ka Rishra*, not to mention

several advertisement films. But Kapoor was not content with just being an actor in Hindi films. He soon ventured into television sitcoms and now is acquiring new fans every week with his comic portrayal of Narinder Gupta, the adorable boss in the television serial, *Mr Ya Mrs?* He has plans to write TV scripts too. In fact, he has already written scripts for *Ravana*, *Hum Rahe Na Hum* and *Do Premi*. But what he would like to do most is write comedies for television. This should not be too difficult for him, considering his penchant for one line witticisms.

Fighting Forward

It appears that MPs these days are making assaults, verbal or otherwise. After Amitabh Bachchan's sally that politics was a "cesspool" sparked off a major row, hockey player turned MP, Aslam Sher Khan's behaviour is



Aslam Sher Khan rough play

raising a lot of eyebrows. Khan, the Congress(I) MP from Betul in Madhya Pradesh, was visibly upset when, at the general meeting of the Indian Hockey Federation held in Bangalore recently, it was decided to recognise the Bhopal Hockey Association. The fact that the association sponsored by Khan had been bypassed and the members had sought to favour the one headed by his rival, Gufarane Azam, was what rankled the veteran sportsman. He vented his spleen on Kishen Lal Passi, secretary of the IHF, by physically attacking him and then locking him up in his hotel room. One wonders why the Indian hockey team fails to show such verve and zest on the field.

Death of a Magazine

The *Herald Review*, a weekly from the Bangalore based Deccan Herald group, bid a quiet adieu to the newsstands recently. The weekly, largely a blend of political and economic reporting of the armchair kind, apparently found the going pretty tough in a market that is getting more and more competi-

tive. The magazine did not even complete a year of existence, falling short by three issues. With this, the ambition of the DH group to "go national" suffers a setback. Despite what surely must have been a chastening experience, the last editorial's last words were: 'This then is no tearful farewell, much less a suicide note.' Bravo!

A Maestro, Anytime

The sarod maestro, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, played before a

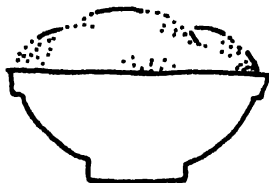


Amjad Ali Khan fine recital

select audience in Calcutta on the evening of 5 August. It was not a scheduled concert. The maestro was in the city to inaugurate a new sound recording studio, Audio Centre, run by Biswajit Prasad, the city's leading sound systems expert. The studio, located on James Long Sarani, has eight-track recording facility. After Amjad Ali Khan had cut the red ribbon, he was persuaded to inaugurate the studio with a recording. He obliged with a spell-binding recital of *Raag Shudh Kalyan*.

The Right Measure

President Ronald Reagan's highly publicised high-fibre diet has brought into focus the benefits of increased fibre intake. It has been proved that a daily intake of 30 or 40 grammes of fibrous foods reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, diverticulitis and growths in the colon. The fact that too much of bran is harmful as it can cause anaemia and calcium deficiency is a lesser-known truth. Nor is bran the answer to all ailments of the intestines: it has little or no effect on the most common intestinal disorder, the irritable bowel syndrome. Bran and other dietary fibres contain phytic acid which prevent the absorption of iron, calcium and probably zinc. Cooking and other heating processes lower the level of phytates, thereby reducing the ill-effects of a very high-fibre diet

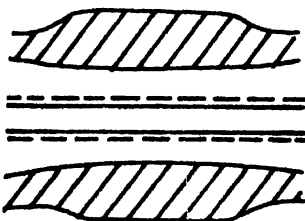


The Vital Nutrients

A woman needs the right diet, before as well as during pregnancy. This has been underlined as doctors have laid an emphasis on the foetal alcohol syndrome: the physical and mental changes which can affect babies of mothers who drink or smoke heavily. Although a good average diet will cover the needs of most pregnant women, special attention should be paid to the intake of folates, calcium, iron, zinc and iodines. Folic acid is basically needed during the first couple of weeks of the pregnancy, when not many women realise that they have conceived. Rich sources of folate are: yeast extracts, liver, broccoli, sprouts, kidneys and nuts. An expectant mother normally requires just over a litre of extra milk daily and the doctors recommend more cheese and milk. Meat is considered to be the best source of iron, and a woman with a history of anaemia should take iron supplements during pregnancy. It has been established that zinc levels fall when women are pregnant, which often leads to birth of smaller babies. Zinc which is found in meat, liver, kidneys, nuts and cheese is recommended to counter this trend.

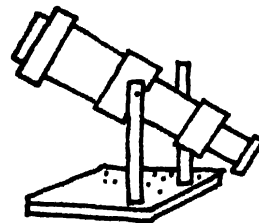
Power from Particles

A new system that provides continuous information about exhaust particles produced during combustion can help scientists design acceptable ways of generating electricity from coal, according to James Wang of Sandia National Laboratories, Livermore, California. Recent tests have indicated that the new system could lead to the assimilation of rapid, reliable information about the amount and size of particles generated by various combustion systems. It can also gather vital data on combustion effluents or airborne particles, which are of great value in hospitals, microelectronics factories, foundries, gas turbines and hot gas cleanup equipment.



Looking for "Old Air"

Scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, USA, are looking for old telescopes and other sealed items that might contain "old air." This could help determine whether the world is experiencing a "greenhouse effect" or the phase in which there is an increased level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The scientists believe that if items that are lying sealed for many years are opened in laboratory conditions, the air trapped inside could give a clue of the quantity of carbon dioxide that existed in the atmosphere at the time, when they were sealed. Moreover, if such objects could be precisely dated, the results could provide a record of the changes in the level of carbon dioxide. Museums too have joined in the search for hollow buttons from military uniforms, to which a precise date can be determined. They are also looking for other hardware decorative items and artifacts to help in the research.

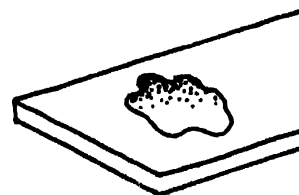


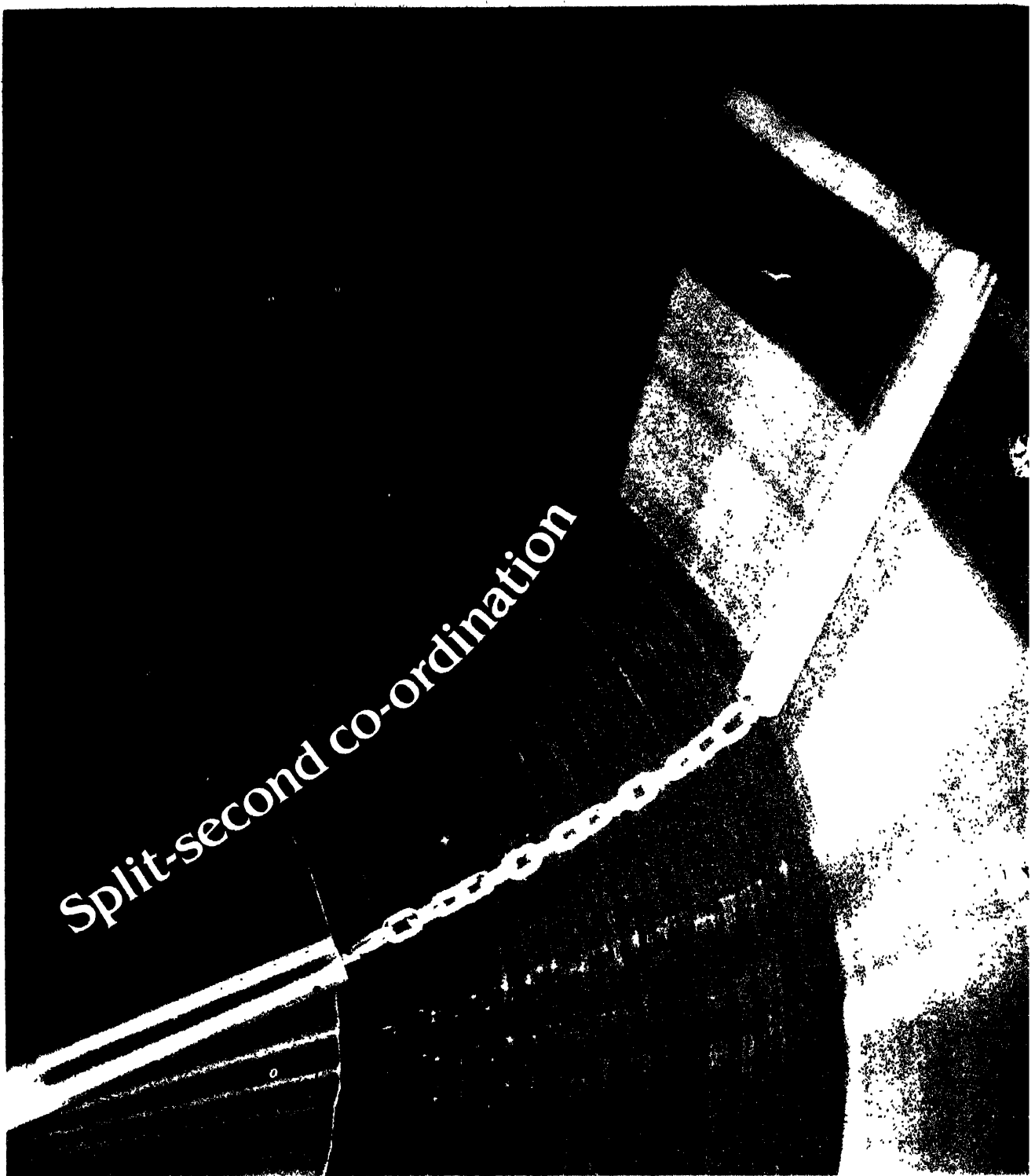
Drug for River Blindness

A new drug that may be able to combat river blindness, which affects about 40 million people in Africa and the Americas, is being tested at Liverpool university in north-west England. Onchocerciasis, as the ailment is otherwise known, is one of Africa's oldest and most intractable problems and is characterised by subcutaneous nodules and blindness. It is caused by the disease-carrying female of the black fly (*simulium damnosum*) family. The new drug, Ivermectin, is a compound which was initially developed for veterinary use. Professor Michael Orme who is leading the Liverpool team of scientists says it is now necessary to establish how the body handles the anti-onchocerciasis injections, which will make the drug more effective.

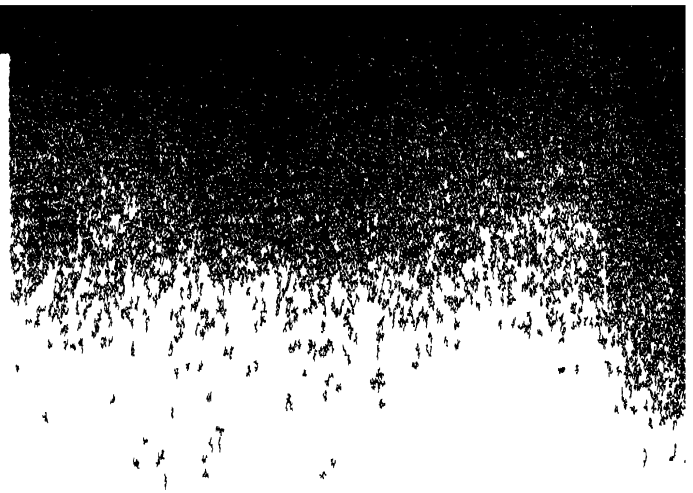
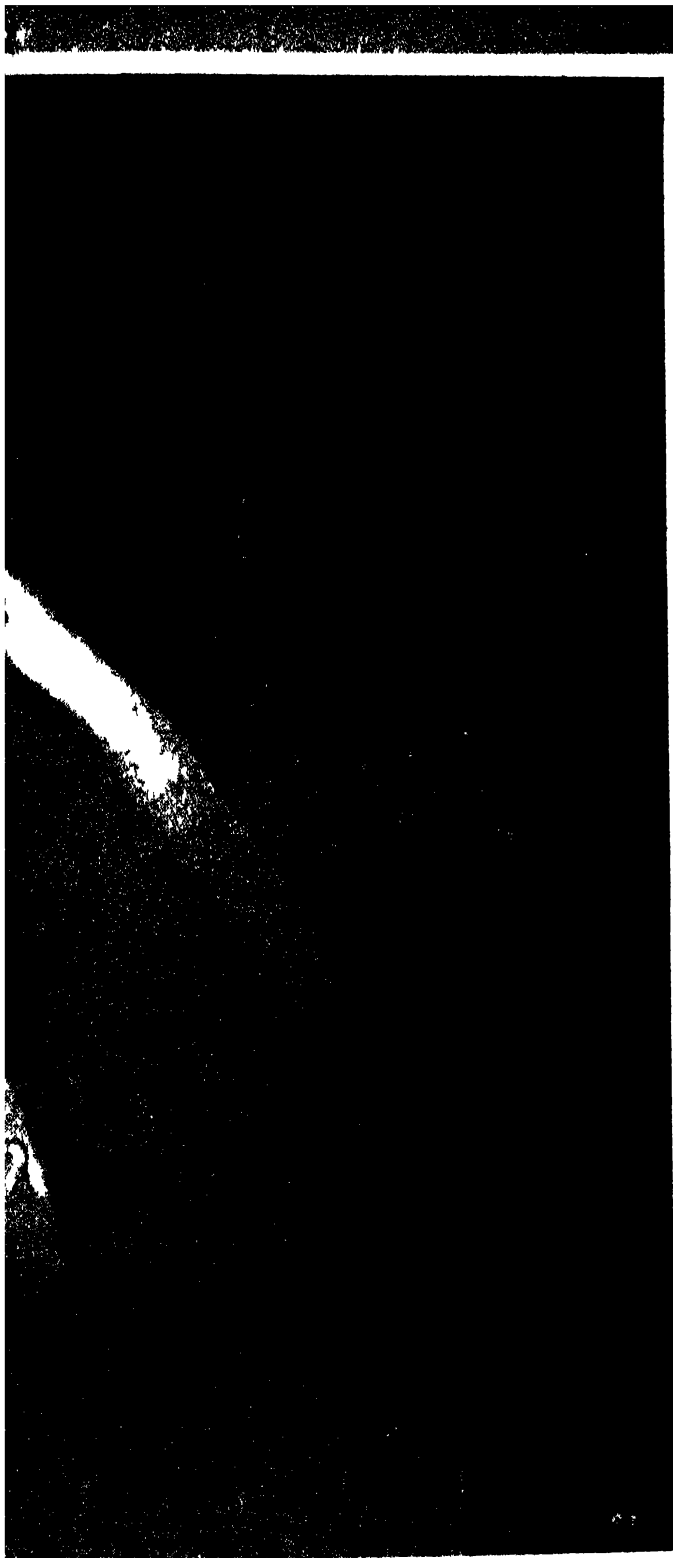
Screening out Impurities

An effective way of testing blood tainted with AIDS or acquired immune deficiency syndrome has been discovered by American scientists, according to a report in the *International Herald Tribune*. Dr Harry M. Meyer, an official of the Food and Drug Administration recently stated at a meeting held at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, USA, that the blood test "seems to be extremely valuable in screening out" blood contaminated with the virus that causes AIDS. The test which was evolved after continuous screening of blood supplied for transfusion, measures the amount of antibodies that the blood produces to combat the virus. Though it does not detect the virus, a close correlation has been found between the presence of the antibodies and the presence of the virus. By one scientific measure, the test is 99.8 per cent accurate in detecting contaminated blood.





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BEGINNING 18 AUGUST BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The week ahead is lucky for you. Those who have appeared for competitive examinations will come out with flying colours. Businessmen will get new opportunities to expand their business while professionals will make steady progress. On the financial front, some of you are likely to inherit wealth. Your health will improve but avoid undertaking journeys.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 24.
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8.
Favourable direction: West.



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is not a good week for professionals: you may come in for severe criticism from your employers. Your colleagues will also misunderstand you. Businessmen should be careful while dealing with their customers. However, those intending to get married will find this period favourable. Disputes regarding property will be resolved in your favour.
Good dates: 21, 22 and 23.
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6.
Favourable direction: South-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a favourable week for romance. On the domestic front disputes will be settled. Children will do well in their studies. For those employed in private concerns, there is a chance of going abroad. Students will make new friends but do not expect such relationships to last. Businessmen should be very careful while making investments.
Good dates: 20, 23 and 24.
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 6.
Favourable direction: North.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Success in all your ventures is a certainty for you this week. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. On the economic front, most of you will gain property through an unexpected source. Your domestic life will remain peaceful. This is a favourable phase for artists.
Good dates: 20, 21 and 22.
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4.
Favourable direction: South.



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) The stars shine brightly on the economic front. Success in all your activities is a certainty this week. Businessmen will bag lucrative contracts while a promotion cannot be ruled out for those in government service. The domestic front will be a source of inspiration. But do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 18, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: North-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is going to be a very lucky week. Friends and relatives will be a source of joy. The weekend will keep you busy with social activities. Your domestic life will be peaceful. On the professional front, a promotion is forecast. A good time for romance and friendship. But guard your health and diet.
Good dates: 18, 21 and 22.
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: South



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The period is favourable for lovers who can materialise marriage plans. Friends and relatives will contribute to your happiness. A promotion is in the offing for those in government service. A letter will bring good tidings at the weekend. The week promises to be an enjoyable one, provided you take care of your health and diet.
Good dates: 19, 20 and 21.
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7.
Favourable direction: North-east.



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) A job is in the offing for those who are unemployed. This week you will come in contact with an influential person. The home front will remain peaceful. This is the ideal time to get married. Businessmen should utilise opportunities that come their way. On the economic front, you will have to shoulder additional responsibilities.
Good dates: 20, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen: push your efforts to the utmost and do not waste time on socialising. Friends and relatives will prove very helpful. The time is equally favourable for those connected with the fine arts. A letter will bring good tidings. On the economic front, some of you may gain money through an unexpected source.
Good dates: 19, 22 and 23.
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 8.
Favourable direction: South-east.



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Enemies will be active during this period: do not take even your close friends and relatives for granted. Financially, you will run into rough weather. Someone at home may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden. Speculative ventures will yield fruitful results.
Good dates: 18, 19 and 20.
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5.
Favourable direction: North.



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A week of hectic social activity lies ahead of you. Financially, this is not a bright period: avoid gambling. An unexpected person is likely to visit you during the weekend. Professionals and businessmen will make steady headway. A member of your family may fall ill.
Good dates: 19, 21 and 23.
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: East.



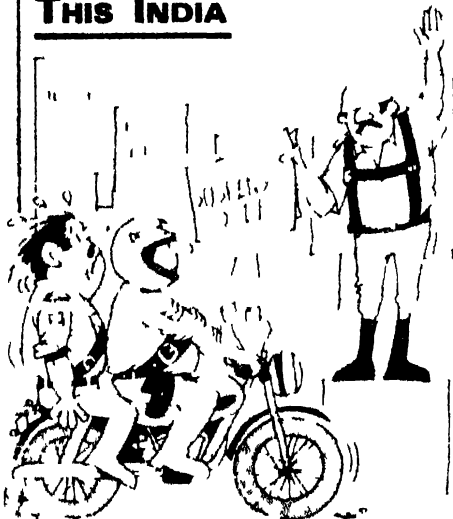
PISCES (15 March—14 April) Financially, this is a good phase but avoid extravagance. This is the right time for businessmen to embark on new ventures. But professionals should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Those unemployed are likely to get jobs during this lucky phase.
Good dates: 18, 19 and 24.
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 9.
Favourable direction: South-east.

For those born between 15 August and 14 September:

You are always inspired by noble ideals and zealously guard the principles you believe in. You are also ambitious and you do not hesitate to undertake challenging assignments. Most of you are compassionate by nature and at times you go out of your way to help friends and relatives. People look upon you with awe and admiration and this induces a sense of pride in you. If you can curb this, you will rise in life. Women born during this period possess a pleasing personality.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



MADRAS Although it is possible to play tricks with the camera, photographic evidence is normally accepted without questions. This is what the city police commissioner did when he ordered, on wireless to suspend the police constable who was found pilion riding without a helmet and whose photograph was published in the *Indian Express* (Madras edition) on 24 July. Even the "helmeted" sub-inspector who was riding the motor cycle was not spared in this case. The commissioner ordered his suspension for granting his subordinate the pleasure of a helmetless ride—*Indian Express* (A Zafrulla Rahmani, Madras)

MADRAS On 1 August, in a clever ploy to preclude the possibility of a group of college students creating any trouble, PTC and the city police "arranged" two buses to ferry them back to their college, but not before collecting their concessional bus tokens. About 60 students of Pachaiyappa's college had come in a procession to garland the statue of Annadurai on Anna Salai. Fearing a clash, the police got in touch with the PTC officials, who immediately "arranged" two 27B buses to take them back to the college after the garlanding ceremony—*The Hindu* (TV Ravi, Madras)

GUNJUR The officials of the District Rural Development Agency who distributed 40 buffaloes to the beneficiaries of a village in Pattipadu taluk had the shock of their lives when they recently visited the village for an inspection. They were shown a single buffalo in turns by all the beneficiaries claiming it to be their own. This was revealed by Dr Makineni Peda Rattayya, MIA at the district planning board meeting held recently—*Newstime* (Miss Asma, Hyderabad)

BANGALORE Believe it or not, it happened on the night of 30 July. A young man's speeding car went out of control on Queen's Road, hit a culvert, knocked down an electrical terminal box, jumped a sloping tree trunk, flew into the air and landed with a thud in Cubbon Park. Incredible, yet true. The young man driving the car escaped with minor injuries. His wife, who was sitting next to him, miraculously escaped unscathed. It all happened around the junction of Cubbon Road and Queen's Road. An eyewitness said the car was six feet up in the air for a shocking moment—*Deccan Herald* (N Mohan, Bangalore)

BIJAPUR Widows and elderly people who come to collect their pensions from the district treasury here are faced with a new problem: they have to prove that they are alive. Senior treasury officials said the pensioners' identity card were not adequate proof even though the card had their photographs and specimen signatures. The pensioners now have to produce a living certificate. The tehsildar of Bala on 30 July issued one such certificate to Bhimappa Vasappa Savalgi who has been receiving pension for the past two months—*min* (Kailash Ukhade, Bangalore, Hooghly)

KUMTA A school with five teachers? That is not a thing to wonder at, but when the total strength of students is four it is definitely intriguing, to say the least. This is the state of affairs at the Higher Primary Marathi School here. While the school has seen better days in the number of students, the staff of teachers has remained constant—*Indian Express* (P Mohan Raj, Bangalore)

CHIKMAGALUR A 16 year old physically handicapped girl passed her tenth standard examination this year by using her feet to answer the question papers. Daughter of Mr H V Gangadharappa, a progressive agriculturist of Hulgere village of Singatagere Hobli in Kadur taluk, Bhagya was born without hands—*Deccan Herald* (M R Jayaprakash, Bangalore)

PAINA Empty plates greeted the Bihar Governor Mr P Venkatasubbiah when he went to the Banquet Hall of Raj Bhavan to host a tea party for members of the Bihar Legislature. The Governor was late, and because the chief minister Mr Bideshwari Dubey was also late, some of the guests became impatient. Disregarding protocol, they ate the snacks provided and left Raj Bhavan—*The Statesman* (Arati Ghosh, Calcutta)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Why prolong President's Rule (in Punjab)? I have always had a feeling that President's Rule solves nothing—Rajiv Gandhi

We shall not go down to the standards of scientists across the (Indo Pak) border. If they feel they are very much advanced let them remain under that illusion—Khurshed Alam Khan, referring to claims by Pakistani scientists that their nuclear capability was superior to India's, quoted in *The Telegraph*



I would not trust any single person with power—whether he is the Chief Justice of India or the law minister—P N Bhagwati, Chief Justice of India, in *India Today*

One uses just the right amount of force not more not less for the desired results. We hit one ball to hit another and after one ball is in the pocket you pick it up and bring it back into the game—Rajiv Gandhi, comparing billiards to politics, while inaugurating the 25th World Amateur Billiards Championship recently

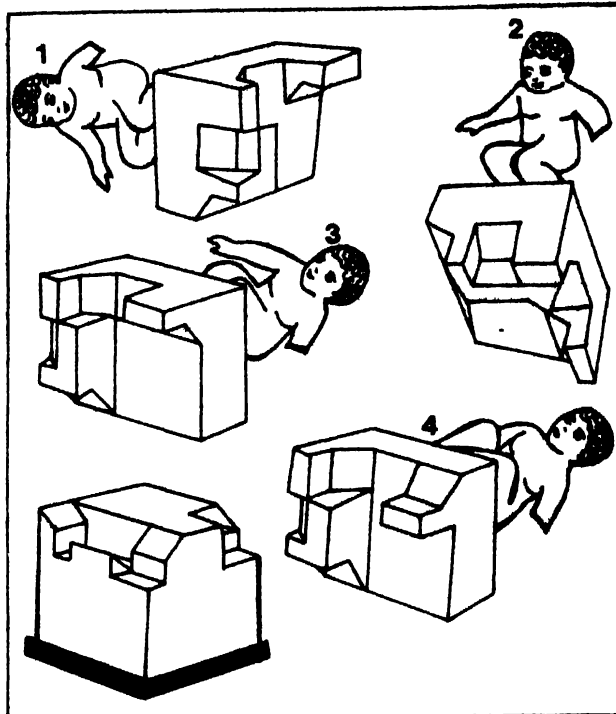
My entire life had been a battle against boredom. It does sum up my life—Edmund Hillary, New Zealand's High Commissioner to India, in *The Hindustan Times* Sunday magazine

What comes from the barrel of the gun you have to keep with the barrel of the gun—Bishop Desmond Tutu, refusing to bow to the South African government's emergency restrictions on what he could preach at funerals, quoted in *The Telegraph*

TEASERS

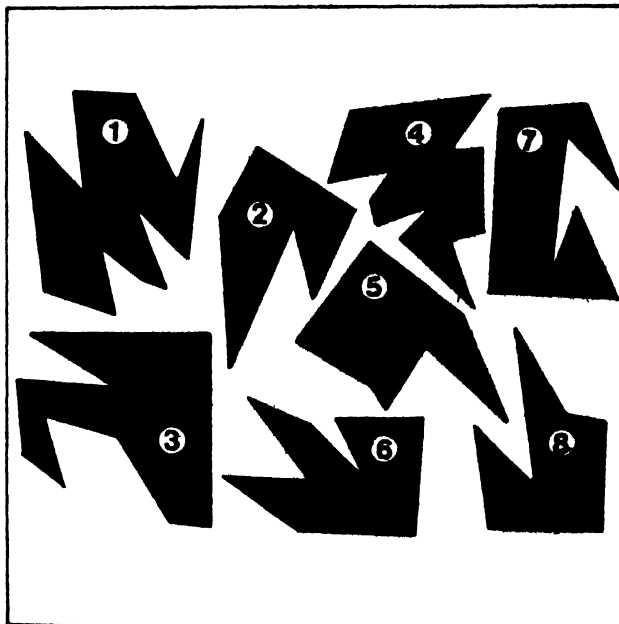
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Figure it Out



Which of the numbered sculptures will fit the base?

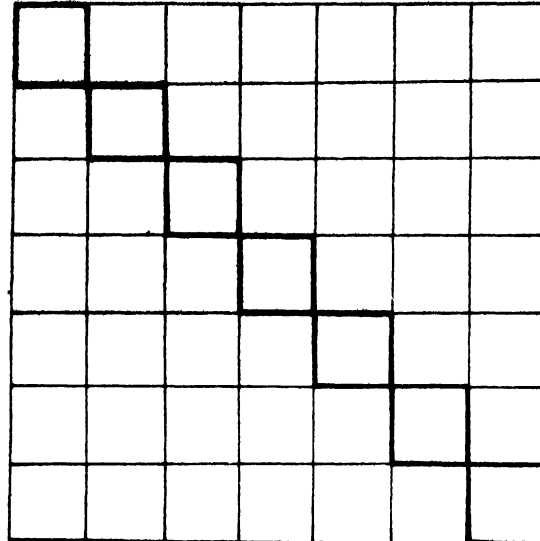
Shape Sleuth



Here is a square that has been cut into pieces. Can you reassemble it? Remember that there are pieces of another dismembered object mixed up with the pieces you need.

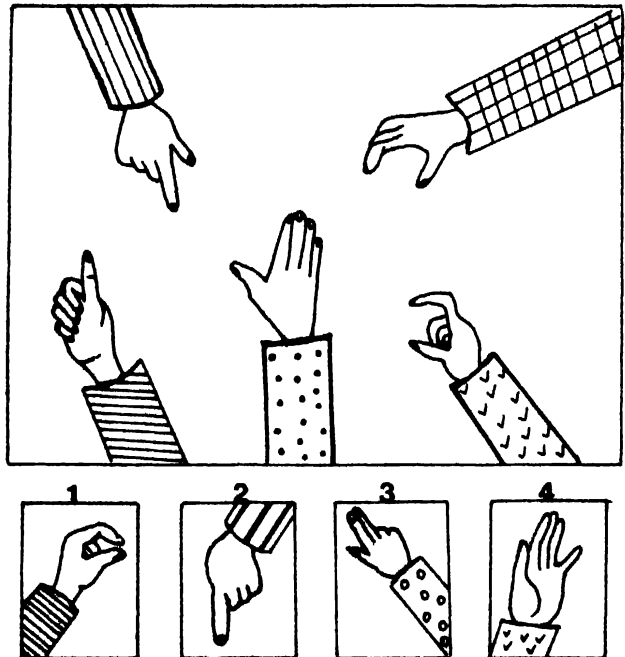
Party Piffle

Srilata was celebrating her birthday with a party. Since her name was made up of seven letters, she decided that she would invite only those of her friends whose names also contained seven letters. We give the names of seven of these friends below. But the name of the eighth is a mystery. If you fit in each of the seven names correctly into the horizontal lines of the grid given below, the eighth name will appear diagonally in the bold squares. Can you say what it is?



The names of the girls we know are Farzana, Savitri, Basanti, Prianka, Bhavana, Sangita, Vatsala

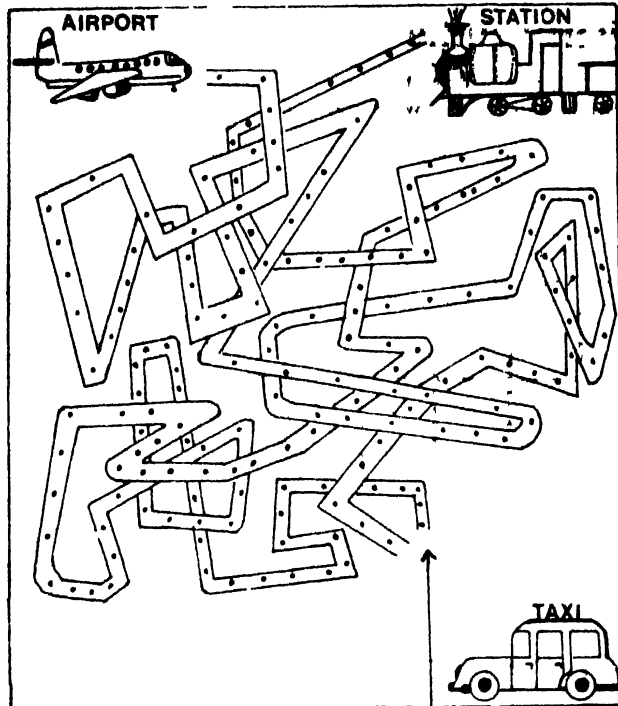
Look Again!



Which of the four numbered hands could be placed logically with the five hands shown in the illustration?

TEASERS

A-maze-ing Journey



Given that the distance between two dots is one kilometre how quickly can you figure out which is nearest to the taxi at the junction shown by the arrow? The airport or the railway station?

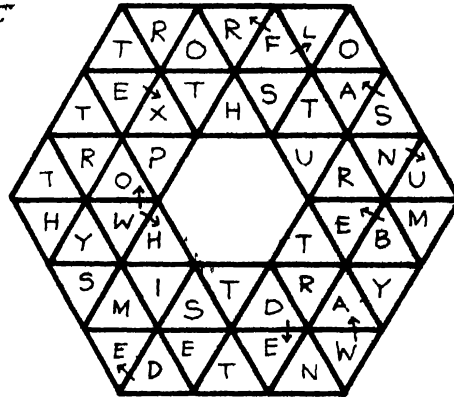
Witsharpener

				213
				264
				?
				213
156	213	258	264	258

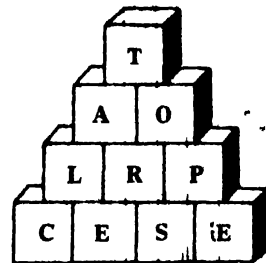
Each of this group of objects has a value. The values of the objects have been totalled together and this is marked alongside. All but one of the totals of the horizontal and vertical lines has been given and also the total of one of the main diagonals. Can you now replace the question mark with the correct value?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Word Play:

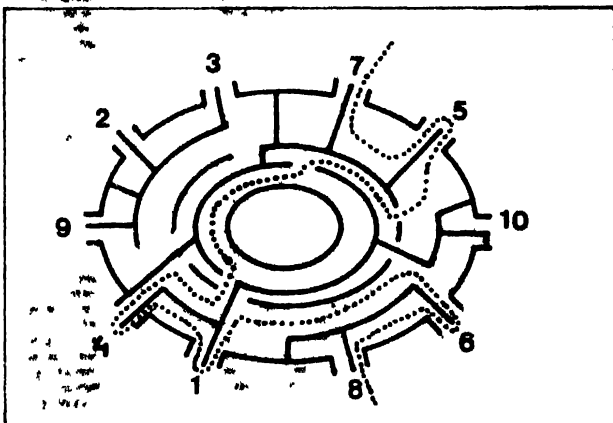


Blockbuster:



Talc, Tale, Tare, Tars, Tore, Tors, Tops, Tope

Figure it Out.



Personality Plus: Swami Vivekananda

Quick Think: Ludicrous

Mindbender: $(6 \times 13) + (11 \times 2) = 78 + 22 = 100$ Strike 13 six times and 11 twice

Word Power: DREAMOE BATH TUBERASERP BNTAGONDOLA

Blankagrams: Asia, Europe, Chihuahua, Ai, Automation, Eerie, Idea, Oboe, Opera, Queue

VARIETY

Chess

It had to happen. Modern information storage technology and chess could not in the long run fail to mate. They have spawned a curious family of publications called 'New in Chess' which do not in fact appear to be new in chess, merely space-age variations of existing species.

Briefly, there are four 'New in Chess' products, all oriented towards openings. A Keybook of games between 1870 and 1982 serves as a cross between 'Modern Chess Openings' and an index, at £27 a somewhat extravagant index. Six monthly half-year books update the Keybook (an obvious comparison here is with the Informator series). There are also monthly and quarterly news magazines.

The technological advance is the use of a computer database system to hold the source material. Sounds impressive, but the effect is not noticeable. A facility for example, to subscribe for six monthly reports on developments in one's pet opening would exploit the computer's potential, but this kind of service is not to my knowledge available. The point therefore is that behind the technological glitter 'New in Chess' does not appear to be offering anything that existing stone

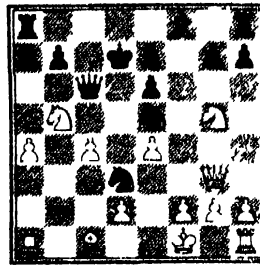
age publications do not in their various corners of the market already provide.

By contrast a game unlikely to find its way into any openings manual.

White: O. Georgiu Black: Chow English Opening New York Open 1984

1 P-QB4 P-QB4 2 N-KB3 N-KB3
3 N-QB3 P-Q4 4 PxP Nxf
5 P-K4 N-N5 6 B-B4 B-K
7 BxB N-Q6+ 8 K-B1 fxb
9 N-KN5 Q-N3 10 Q-B3

Chow (Black)



Georgiu (White) to move

An improvement on 10 Q-K2 which led to a brilliant win for Black in a game Polugaevsky-Tal 1979 published in this column.

10 P-B5 11 P-QN3 Q-R3
12 P-OR4!

Surprising but strong. If 12 PxP 13 N-N4 with dual threats of N-B7+ and CxN.

12 K-Q2 13 N-N5 N-B3
14 PxP N(B3)-K4 15 Q-N3 Q-B3

DIAGRAM

16 B-N7! NxB
Or 16 QxBP 17 BxN NxB+ 18 P-Q3!
NxP 19 R-Q1
17 QxN QxP 18 P-Q3! NxP
14 R-Q1 R-Q1 20 NxKP! Resigns

BRIDGE

The deal below is curiously deceptive. Two experienced players both muddled it at the table.

Dealer South Game all

♠ 7 5 4 2
♥ 10 6
♦ A Q J 3
♣ A 8 5
N
W E
S
♠ A K Q J
♥ A Q 7 5 4 2
♦ K
♣ J 3

The contract was Six Spades and West led a low club. South won with the ace in dummy, drew three rounds of trumps, and

overtook the king of diamonds to cash a club on the queen. Then he took the heart finesse.

Do you see anything wrong with this? This was the full hand.



♠ 7 4 2
♥ 10 6
♦ A Q J 3
♣ A 8 5
N
W E
S
♠ A K Q J
♥ A Q 7 5 4 2
♦ K
♣ J 3

The heart finesse succeeded but when the suit broke 4-1 South was a trick short. When he wins the first club in dummy, he must take the heart finesse immediately. It holds, and when the trump break 3-2 he has twelve tricks on top. He simply draws trumps, cashes king of diamonds and ruffs the third round of hearts. He doesn't need to develop any long hearts.

BRUCE REESE

QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS

- Which sea is known as the Mediterranean of the north?
- What do the following have in common: Puleepsinhji, Vinoo Mankad, Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, B.S. Chan drasekhar and Kapil Dev?
- Cathay is the old name of which country?
- Which Roman emperor made Caesar a title to be conferred on the heir presumptive to the throne?
- Which country is the largest producer of chillies?
- What is the equivalent rank of a lieutenant colonel in the Indian Navy?
- What is a barbican?
- The 22nd amendment of the Indian

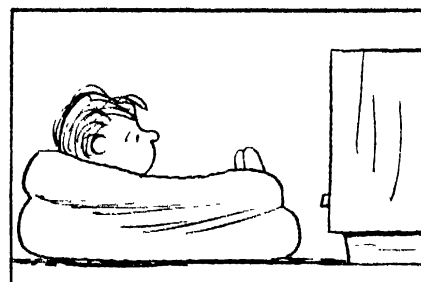
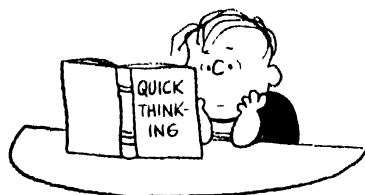
- Constitution led to the formation of a new state. Name the state.
- In the Bible the age of only one woman is recorded. Who?
- Which state or union territory in India is the most densely populated?
- Name the first western scientist to translate the Arabian Nights.
- The national languages of which country are Spanish?
- Name the first Britisher to be president of the Indian National Congress.
- With which mathematician is the development of set theory associated?
- Name the European organisation set up in May 1949 with its headquarters in Strasbourg to achieve unity and socio-economic progress.

- The Baltic Sea
- They have all been nominated by Wisden as cricketers of the year
- China
- Emperor Hadrian in 136 AD
- India
- Commander
- The outwork of a fortified town
- castle used to defend the drawbridge
- Meghalaya
- Sarah, Abraham's wife
- Delhi
- Antoine Galland, a French orientalist
- Penn
- George Yule
- George Cantor
- The Council of Europe

ANSWERS

PEANUTS

featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"
by SCHULZ



SCIENCE

How Useful are Nitrates?

In much of western Europe drinking water from boreholes is already contaminated by nitrate, to a level that the EEC has decided is "unacceptable." This pollution will grow steadily worse. Farmers are drenching their land with nitrate fertilisers, which will percolate down into the water supply over the rest of this century. Does it matter? Are nitrates really bad for you?

The evidence that nitrate is harmful is circumstantial: regions where people have high-nitrate diets also have high rates of stomach cancer. This is logical: bacteria in the mouth and stomach are known to react with nitrates to make "nitroso" compounds that are damaging to tissue and therefore possibly carcinogenic. A layman might think that would stand up in a court of science as reasonable proof.

A team of epidemiologists at Oxford's Radcliffe Infirmary has just demonstrated how wrong that layman would be. They said that the correlations between nitrate intake and cancer were too broad to be trustworthy, and set out to research a

more precise pattern. They measured the nitrate levels in people's saliva in different parts of Britain, some with high stomach-cancer rates and others with low rates. After allowing for confounding variables (eg. cigarette smokers tend to get stomach cancer more often than non-smokers, most people have high nitrate levels in their saliva after meals), they concluded that there was a strong inverse correlation: the high cancer-risk areas have little nitrate and the low cancer-risk areas a lot of it. Nitrate—or something that tends to go with it—seems to have a protective rather than a damaging effect. Warning: the Oxford study may be warped by some special British factors. Nitrate could still be a danger. In some parts of the world a blood disorder called methaemoglobinemia is definitely caused by nitrates (by-products of nitrates).

Despite Oxford's findings, water authorities are steeling themselves for expensive remedies as nitrate levels rise above the EEC's recommended limit of 50 milligrams per litre of water. The Association of

Dutch Water Production Companies estimates that this limit will be breached soon in a quarter of Holland's supplies. This will trigger treatment for 100m cubic metres of groundwater a year in Holland. In Britain, the ultimate cost could be 10 times that.

Meanwhile, researchers at the Agricultural University of Wageningen in Holland have developed a nitrate extraction technique, which, they say, will make groundwater drinkable. Their technique combines the two existing processes of ion exchange and biological denitrification. As the water flows through the ion exchanger—a column of resinous material—nitrate is extracted and replaced by bicarbonate. The nitrate is then "consumed" in another denitrification column by special bacteria. These bacteria eat away at nitrate, transforming it into innocuous nitrogen gas. The result is water which is waste-free but has a bicarbonate concentration of 100 milligrams per litre for every 50 milligrams of nitrate removed. The Wageningen research leader, Dr Abraham Kalp-wijk, compares this with spa water and claims such concentrations of bicarbonate are both safe and tasty.

By arrangement with The Economist

DELHI DIARY

NTR's Opposition

The anti-NTR atmosphere is gathering ground in the opposition. After the Andhra units of various opposition parties opposed NTR's "dictatorial ways" some leaders at the central level too spoke openly against him, but only at the intra-party level. A big anti-NTR lobby has been built up in parties like the Janata but their problem seems to be that their own senior leaders are opposing any anti-NTR moves at the moment. Their thinking seems to be that any stand against NTR would be construed as siding with the Congress(I). "But," said an agitated young Janata leader who had just returned from Andhra Pradesh, "how can opposing NTR be taken as a pro-Congress(I) move for NTR has himself made friends with the Congress(I) now." NTR's new found love for New Delhi has created anger not only



N.T. Rama Rao

in the opposition camp but also among senior Andhra Congress(I) leaders. After

all, if NTR makes up with the Congress(I), what will happen to them?

Charan Singh Remembers

The octogenarian Lok Dal chieftain, Chaudhary Charan Singh, is neither seen in Parliament (he is among the few of the opposition's front-line leaders in Parliament now, Chandra Shekhar having lost the polls and Sharad Pawar resigning his seat after being elected to the Maharashtra Assembly) nor has he been very active on the party front. Lok Dal sources say that the Chaudhary has been assiduously at work on two books. One of them is said to be a continuation of his thesis on "the Indian situation," as Charan Singh sees it. The other project, however, is the more interesting one. It has tentatively been titled, "The Charan Singh Papers" and it is, inevitably, on the Janata interregnum of 1977-1979. To be sure, the book, when it comes out, will kick up another flashback controversy.

Rumour Exchange

On Friday, 2 August, the foreign exchange market all over India did not open till noon. Reason: the Reserve Bank of India had not announced the sterling-rupee middle rate. The market was rife with rumours that a sharp movement in pound sterling abroad had driven the rupee outside the plus-minus 2.5 per cent band of the basket of currencies; that the union cabinet was in session and the Prime Minister was seized of the matter. Was a devaluation on the cards? The fact was that none of these had happened. Due to heavy rainfall in Bombay that morning, the RBI staff who know the basket formula could not turn up for work. Only when they reported around noon could the market open, and the rumours subside.

A History of Labour

If the Bureau of Public Enterprises is to be believed, then Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister on 15 August 1984. The BPE invited nominations from public sector undertakings in the end of July for the Shram Ratna, Shram Bhushan, Shram Sri, Shram Devi and Shram

Veer awards. Rajiv Gandhi had announced the institution of these awards in a workers' rally in Dhanbad on 1 May. The BPE circular said that the awards had been instituted by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on Independence Day last year (when Mrs Gandhi was the PM, Rajiv Gandhi as a Congress general secretary could not have made such an announcement).

Mistakes of chronology apart, the very fact that the BPE circular was sent in early August shows that while deciding the names the sponsoring undertakings had to act in haste. Apparently the Prime Minister's announcement about awards for efficiency did not make the concerned officers shrug off their lethargy: from 1 May to end-July, no action was taken on the matter.

Foreign Travel?

Is the morning Airbus flight from Calcutta to Delhi being treated as an international flight? The international departure lounge of the Dumdum airport is being used for the check-in, passengers pass through the "immigration" door before proceeding for the security check (though there is no checking at this point).

The duty free shop of the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), laden with imported goods provides a good distraction for the passengers waiting in the queue for security check. It is only at this point that passengers realise that they are not on an international flight—the shop is closed at that hour. With dwindling international traffic, the airport authorities apparently had to think of utilising the facilities at Dumdum

in a better way. The British Airways having decided to withdraw, now only the Soviet Union's Aeroflot, Thai International, Bangladesh Biman and Royal Nepal Airlines fly into Dumdum. And perhaps in tune with the Marxist government in the state, two more communist countries' airlines, Lot of Poland and Balkan of Bulgaria, are planning services to the city in the near future.

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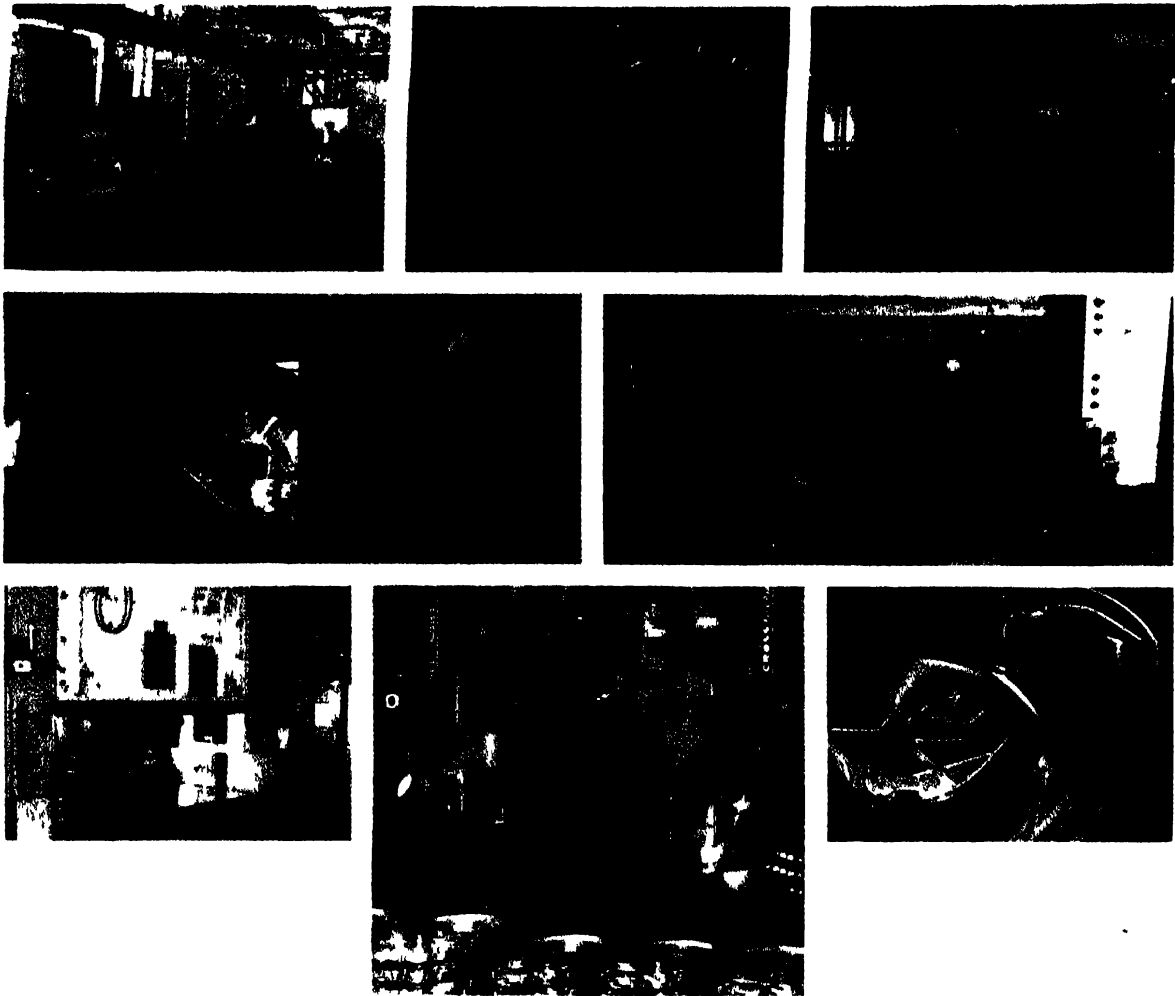
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Jayalalitha

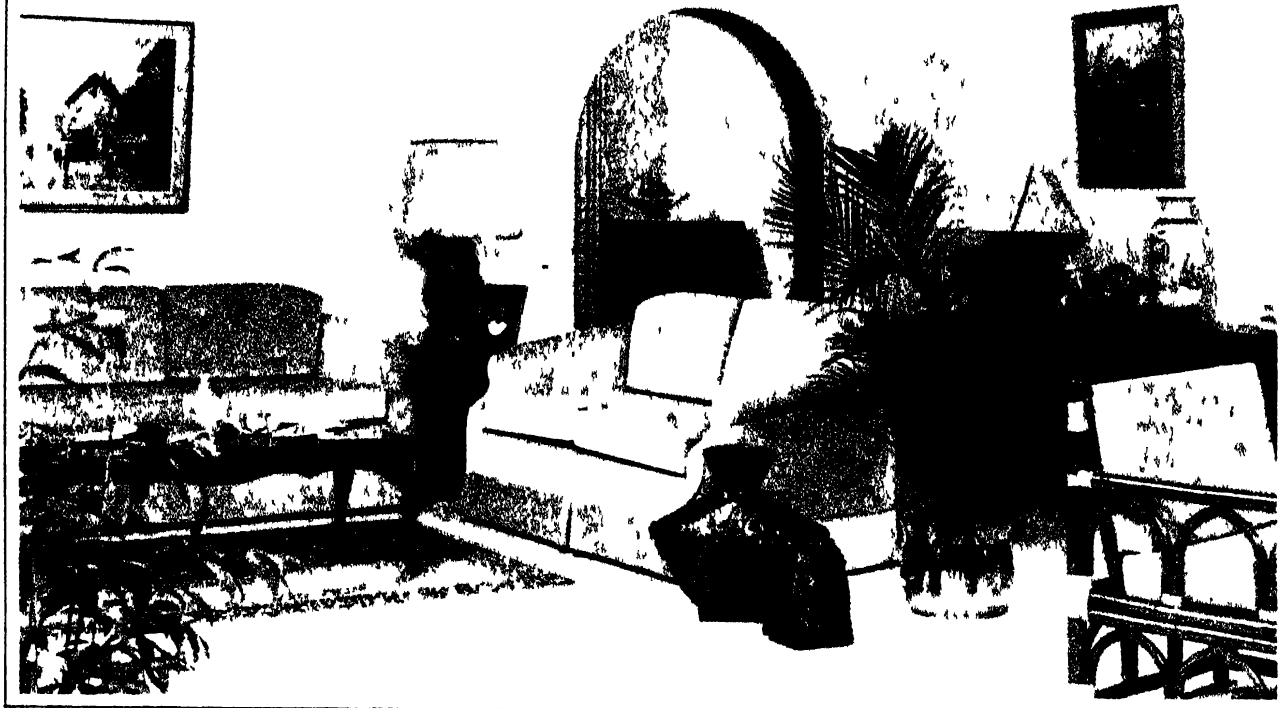
Skating on
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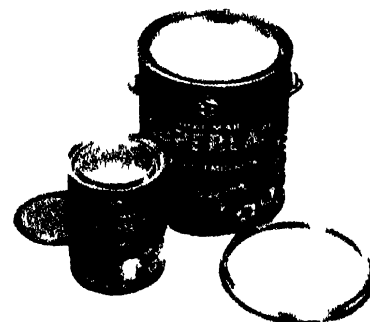
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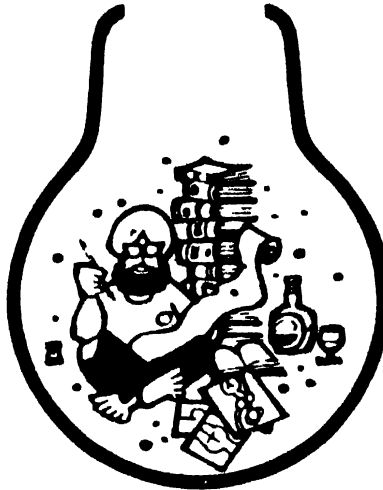


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More on Tagore

My lengthy, illustrative review of William Radice's translations of Tagore's poems brought me a crop of translations done by other admirers of Gurudev soliciting my help to have them published. Since I do not know Bengali and therefore unable to judge their accuracy, the best I could do was to give them the names of publishers who might be interested. Amongst these were a few samples of renderings done by a foreign padre Brother James of St Joseph High School in Dhaka (Bangladesh). Since I found them very readable I showed them to Sankar Prasad Mitra, retired Chief Justice of Bengal who sits next to me in the Rajya Sabha. He spent quite some time going over them and marked those verses which he felt were faithful to the original. One is apparently on the nature of the divinity Tagore like Sufis and the Bhakti poets regarded the relationship between the seeker and the sought on par with the yearning of a lover for his beloved.

I'm not strong enough
to bear the burden of your love
So in this world you have mercifully
set between us a great barrier—
The walls of joys of sorrows of honour
of people of possessions
From time to time
You let yourself be seen slightly
from behind the lattice,
In the breaks in the dark clouds
I see the tempered light of the sun
But to him to whom you give the power
to bear the burden of limitless love,
You remove completely
all screens, all obstructions



You put in front of him no barriers
of home or family,
You don't keep anything of his
You bring him down the path
and impoverish him
He minds not his pride nor insults
nor the fear bred of shyness or shame
You alone and by yourself
become his whole world his whole life

In this way he stays
face to face with you,
He has nothing more to do
but fill his life with you
For him who has obtained this mercy
there is now no limit to his desire
He has cast aside all other desires
the better to give you room'

For seasonal reasons I found the following poem very evocative. Since the last lines of every verse are repeated, it is likely to be a song.

Today I see
the monsoon's semblance in man,
He moves on thundering,
He moves on the dark array
In his heart there dances a dreadful force,
He rushed on abolishing all bounds
Under what compulsion
does cloud clash against cloud
and produce thunder?
Today I see
the monsoon's semblance in man
Vast masses move on toward the distance
in clusters,
not knowing why they do so
They don't know at all
at the foot of which great mountain
some sombre *Sraban* day
they'll dissolve into water
Neither does man know
what a dreadful world of life and death
is bound up
with his dark and dreadful grandeur
Today I see
the monsoon's semblance in man
In the northeast corner of the sky
hark the storm's voice
It is whispering with a rumbling sound
Beyond the horizon in the motionless darkness
What destiny bears its speechless pain?
In the deep gloom
some black fantasy is forming
to do its imminent task
Today I see
the monsoon's semblance in man

Desai Versus Sarkar

The late Bhulabhai Desai was renowned for his ready wit which helped him to score over his adversaries in debate. Less is known of an equally witty and resourceful person, Sir N N Sarkar who happened to be the law minister before Independence. Sarkar was introducing a bill to make provisions for the care of illegitimate children and mistresses who were left unprovided by men they had lived with. Desai thought he would put Sarkar on the spot by asking 'May I know from the Hon'ble law minister what is his government's attitude towards men keeping mistresses?'

N N Sarkar was quick to retort "Sir, we have no first hand experience of such relationships and will be happy to receive guidance from honourable members like yourself who have more knowledge and experience of the subject."



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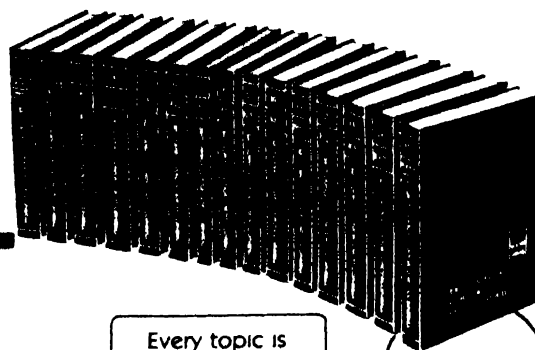
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A PM Who Dares

The late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, had her detractors. Most of them did not like her because of the way in which she ruled the country. Her policies often aroused distrust. This was apparent after she imposed the Emergency in 1975. Even after she came back to power in 1980, she did little to allay fears people had about her.

Rajiv Gandhi inherited this popular mistrust. In fact, in the first phase of his prime ministership, Rajiv Gandhi had done little to put the people at ease. His speeches during the Lok Sabha and the Assembly polls along with his party's advertisements in the media only deepened doubts about the honesty of his intentions. Today, however, the Prime Minister is seen in new light. His deft handling of the Punjab, Assam and Gujarat problems has won him the hearts of every Indian who has the security of the country uppermost in his mind. The solution to the problems has also won him the trust of everyone including Indira Gandhi's detractors. According to political observers, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's policies have earned him respectability among intellectuals.

The number of sycophants still remains high because they are primarily concerned with making false pretences, not with the nation's problems or policies. They will continue to beat their drums no matter who is at the helm of affairs. But they are a minority. There is a large majority among Rajiv Gandhi's supporters who are relieved that tensions in the country are easing. Most people also feel that the Prime Minister has the ability and courage to tackle even the most difficult of problems. That his style of operations is completely different from his mother's is an accepted fact. His mother often alienated many people with her efforts to delay the settlement of the problems. She had a knack for making her countrymen feel that India was on the brink of disaster and only she could steer the country to safety.

Rajiv Gandhi being young himself has helped. His age is a reassurance that the aspirations of the young will be understood and they will be provided the role previously denied them by the elders. Apart from a few disorderly and riotous members of the younger generation, most lawyers, executives, economists, doctors and even officials feel the existence of a common bond between themselves and the PM.

Rajiv Gandhi has brought a refreshing new image with him. Regardless of what he actually does, Mr Gandhi represents something authentic for the common man. He has a positive approach to problems and his sincere efforts to tackle them boldly have been widely appreciated by one and all. His supporters do not need to put forward argu-

ments to defend him like Mrs Gandhi's supporters.

Had Indira Gandhi not torpedoed the solutions in the last stages, the Punjab and Assam problems would have been solved much earlier. While the delay in solving the Punjab problem saw the entry of Bhindranwale, the Assam problem almost reached flashpoint when the late Prime Minister took the then Assam governor L P Singh to task for having offered 1967 as the cut off year.

Though Rajiv Gandhi's efforts to solve the country's problems are genuine, many activists and intellectuals cannot help feeling concerned at the corruption, vulgarity and waste usually associated with the government which continues unabated. Chaos and callousness at the lower levels of administration and the nexus among politicians, criminals and the police also continues. It is even more difficult for these intellectuals and activists to reconcile themselves to the brutal laws the Rajiv Gandhi government has enacted to suppress liberty under the pretext of taking action against terrorists. They find it odd that the Congress should be dominated by the Rajendra Kumar Bajpai, the Sheila Kauls and K K Tewari who have neither any convictions nor the political base. The more Mr Gandhi allows such people to speak for him or his party, the greater will be the doubts about the dawn of a new era which the PM has been talking about.

Another problem with Rajiv Gandhi is his infatuation with bureaucrats who cannot rise above the precedents and prejudices they have themselves built up over the years. The most well meaning of programmes have gone awry because of them. According to many, the lesser the bureaucrats are in the picture, the better it would be for the Prime Minister and his policies.

Even if Rajiv Gandhi's economic programmes take time to fructify—at least this is the reason being attributed for the absence of any visible change in the extent of poverty and unemployment—for the common people, reforms to benefit the poor and the deprived are more important than announcements of intent. On scrutinising the PM's work in the economic field, many feel that the new policies favour the upper crust of society more than those at the lower levels. Besides, they fail to understand how high technology alone can oust unemployment and poverty.

They may be sceptics, but it is important to note that these very people could have helped Rajiv Gandhi give the country the political and economic thrust which it had lost under Indira Gandhi's authoritarian rule.

Rajiv Gandhi has brought a refreshing new image with him. Regardless of what he does, Mr Gandhi represents something authentic for the common man. He has a positive approach to problems and his sincere efforts to tackle them boldly have been widely appreciated by one and all.

A Sigh of Relief

The cover story, *Punjab: Peace At Last?* (4-10 August) by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya was praiseworthy. The settlement with Sant Longowal is a remarkable achievement on the part of the Prime Minister and his government. Arjun Singh deserves special credit for his role in bringing about the accord. However, I feel, due honour should be given to those Sikhs who had opposed extremism and were loyal to the government all through the crisis.

Nirjhar Dasgupta, Calcutta

- The Punjab accord came to us as a pleasant surprise. Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal both deserve accolades for promoting peace in the state. Sant Longowal has become a hero in our eyes. He took up the task of uniting the Hindus and the Sikhs in spite of major opposition from the militant wing of the Akali Dal. But the man who commands our sincerest respect is Arjun Singh. His efforts to bridge the gulf of differences between the government and the Akalis yielded fruit.

Subroto Nandi, Dhanbad

- The cover story gave us a detailed report on how the accord was reached between the Prime Minister and Sant Longowal. It has the unanimous approval of all, save a few disgruntled elements who are bent on creating mischief in the country. The Prime Minister has displayed a lot of dexterity and foresight by resolving the Punjab tangle so expeditiously. Sant Longowal must be commended for his fortitude which he showed at this critical juncture. The accord signals an end to the period of violence and confrontation and ushers in a new era of peace and progress.

Arvinder Singh Walia, Calcutta

- With the signing of the accord, the Punjab problem has at last been solved. Let us hope that this agreement will pave the way for solving the other outstanding problems confronting the country.

Prodip Dhar, Dibrugarh (Assam)

- The signing of the Punjab accord is the happiest event of the year. Though the Punjab impasse could have been solved earlier, without the loss of so many innocent lives, it is better late than never. There are bound to be voices of dissent because everyone is not likely to be satisfied



with the accord. But disgruntled leaders like Badal and Tohra should stop sulking and support it wholeheartedly for the unity of the nation.

Smita Narang, New Delhi

- It has been rightly pointed out by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya that "the accord is unique and has brought a sigh of relief to the entire nation." The mild threats from some quarters are likely to melt in the coming months with the emergence of Sant Longowal as the universally accepted leader and mentor of the Sikhs.

Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (WB)

- The wholehearted support of the people to Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal acted as a source of courage to the leaders in their efforts to remove uncertainty and tension from the life of the nation. What could not be done in years, has been attained in a very short time because where there is a will there is a way. This agreement will unnerve the extremists, both in India and abroad.

D.D. Mehta, New Delhi

- A positive step has been taken to restore the traditional friendship between Sikhs and Hindus. The Prime Minister has proved that his government not only works but works fast to produce results. Sant Longowal and his advisers have also shown great statesmanship, fortitude and courage in rising above the bitterness of the past.

Jai Kumar Mulchandani, Lucknow

- I was surprised by Khushwant Singh's statement that Indira Gandhi lacked "foresight and statesmanship" (*Punjab Lives Again*). Does he mean to say that Mrs Gandhi did not have these qualities and that Rajiv Gandhi possesses them?

Arta Mishra, Cuttack

- The articles presented a well-balanced and factual view of the post accord period. However, I was amused by Khushwant Singh's suggestion that both Rajiv Gandhi and Arjun Singh should be awarded Bharat Ratnas for their achievements. A Prime Minister does not deserve the highest award of the country just for solving a pressing internal issue.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur

- *How Far is Peace?* made interesting reading. With the signing of the Punjab accord it has been proved that the Indira Gandhi era is behind us and a new phase of political development has begun. Indeed, an issue which had posed dangers for the country's integrity has been resolved. The accord should be viewed impartially and not in terms of a victory or a defeat.

K.K. Tangeja, New Delhi

- Though the Prime Minister has solved the Punjab problem successfully, there are other problems like the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka and sharing of water between Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, confronting him. We hope he takes the same initiative in solving the major internal issues as well as counter the nuclear bomb threat from Pakistan.

P. Ramani, Ahmedabad

- A step taken after a costly delay of at least 16 months, should have been taken with great humility and sobriety. Now when emotional factors have overshadowed political and economic issues in Punjab, no national purpose is likely to be served by building up the images of Sant Longowal as a "brave leader" and Rajiv Gandhi as a "great statesman." In fact, taking into view the manner in which the accord is being publicised, it is clear that even if the original motive behind it was national interest its primary use now is to divide the Sikhs and win the Punjab elections. As Khushwant Singh has said on several occasions, the Punjab problem is not going to be solved unless the Sikh panth can have a meaningful share of political power.

Vishal Mangalwadi, New Delhi

Politics of Violence

The special report, *Mischief in Kashmir* (28 July—3 August) gave an objective analysis of the political situation in the state. It



Farooq Abdullah: popular leader

seems that the Congress(I) is in a dilemma: if it continues to support the G.M. Shah ministry it will tarnish its image while at the same time it cannot think of supporting Farooq Abdullah. The only way out for the Congress(I) is to reach a favourable agreement with Dr Abdullah's party. *Rajesh Sahay, Hazaribagh (Bihar)*

- I strongly condemn the murderous attack on Farooq Abdullah. Nothing can be gained through violence. It has to be seen whether the committee appointed by the state government to look into the matter, conducts the enquiry without bias. I would like the Prime Minister to end the political crisis in Kashmir by holding the Assembly elections. *K. Ravichandran, Ahmedabad*

- I was shocked to learn of the conspiracy to kill Farooq Abdullah. Such attempts should be strongly condemned by everyone concerned. The government should take stern measures against terrorist activities. *S. Sridharan, Ahmedabad*

Personal Functions at Public Expense

The bold expose of the Rajasthan chief secretary in *Revelry at Public Expense* (News, 14—20 July) disturbed me. At a time when our Prime Minister is trying his level best to root out corruption, it was distressing to learn that corrupt bureaucrats are still ruling our country. The Rajasthan chief secretary has surpassed all limits of corruption by openly misappropriating government funds to celebrate his wedding anniversary. I was also surprised to learn that top government officials including the Governor of the state attended the party. It is high time the government ordered an enquiry into the matter since public money is involved.

Rajesh Gupta, Ahmedabad

- SUNDAY did a brilliant job by exposing corrupt bureaucrats like Anand Mohan Lal. He should be punished for wasting our hard-earned money.

Banashri Nair, Nagpur

- Why does a senior IAS officer have to stoop so low and openly flout the code of conduct of a respected cadre? After going through the report I felt that the Rajasthan chief secretary was above the law. Even the senior officers of the state did not have the courage to protest or were they sailing in the same boat as that of Mohan

Lal? What was the state vigilance doing when the chief secretary was wasting public money on his jamboree?

S.K. Mushran, Lucknow

- We cannot allow such outrageous actions by our bureaucrats to go unpunished. Anand Mohan Lal should be suspended, an enquiry instituted to assess the extent of misappropriation of public funds and the amount recovered from him together with the necessary penalty. Unless prompt and punitive action is taken in such cases, we can never be rid of this cancerous disease in our body politic.

B.D. Goel, New Delhi

Focus on the Hapless

The photofeature, *Hunger in Jhabua* (28 July—3 August) touched me deeply. Sondeep Shankar's picture report on the drought-hit district of Rajasthan revealed what a thousand words could not. It was indeed pathetic to read that fodder was being sold at the rate of Rs 150 per bale which lasts for only about three days. I only hope that the PM's visit to the district will improve conditions.

Rani Padmanaban, Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu)

Militant Views

In his interview the Mizo National Front leader Laldenga advocated the theory of might is right (*'The Government Had No Right to Dominate Us,'* 4—10 August). He even desired to use a nuclear bomb to achieve his ends and nourished the idea of an independent Mizoram. The leader added, "The shape of my nose is the stumbling block in India." How can such a person aspire to become the chief minister of a state is beyond my comprehension. We will invite more trouble if a person having such prejudices against India is given power.

Dandapani Panda, Ganjam (Orissa)

Exploits of a CM

The misdeeds of Jagannath Mishra and A.R. Antulay is history, but Bhajan Lal seems to have stolen a march over them (*How Corrupt is Bhajan Lal?* 21—27 July). The wealth amassed by the Haryana CM and his son-in-law could have benefitted the poor of the state.

M.M. Singh, Giridih (Bihar)

- The report exposed the corrupt dealings of Bhajan Lal. He should be asked to resign from his present position as also from the Congress(I). *A. N. Veeraraghavan, Bombay*

- Bhajan Lal is neck-deep in corruption. The condition of Haryana is pathetic. Bhajan Lal has perfected the art of purchasing, selling and kidnapping MLAs. Favouritism has reached its zenith under his reckless leadership. One finds a Bishnoi in almost every high and responsible position in the state. It is astonishing that a person like him, with such a dubious record, is allowed to carry on as the chief minister.

Naresh Sachdev, Faridabad

- Sankarshan Thakur's report on the corrupt practices of Bhajan Lal did not surprise me at all. In the ruling party there are hundreds of MLAs and MPs who are amassing wealth through dubious means. The PM's assurances of providing a clean government is nothing but a joke when there are people like Bhajan Lal holding important positions. The chief ministers of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat have already been sacked. Now it is the turn of Bhajan Lal. However, I feel that just removing him from his present post will not be an adequate punishment for his misdeeds. Stronger measures should be taken against him. *S. C. Malakar, Agra*

Assam

The End of a Nightmare

Though the Assam accord has added yet another feather to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's cap, it has created more problems than it has solved, reports Tooshar Pandit from Guwahati

President Zail Singh was in a quandary when he was informed on the evening of 13 August that an accord on Assam was all but on paper. If an agreement had actually been signed by the time his message to the nation, on the eve of Independence day, went on the air the following day the way it was, the President would appear to have missed a beat. For, in his speech, recorded on 12 August, he did not visualise the actual signing of an accord so soon and only said: "I believe that current discussions on the Assam problem would

also result in a satisfactory solution." Should he let that sentence go on the air? Finally he decided that if an agreement was signed by 2 pm on 14 August the sentence would be deleted from his speech. It was not, because the signing was delayed by another 12 hours.

When Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, Bhriгу Phukan and Biraj Sarma, the negotiators for the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), the two principal organisations spearheading the anti-immigrant agitation in the north-

eastern state of Assam, stepped out of the Prime Minister's residence barely five hours before Rajiv Gandhi announced in his Independence day address from the Red Fort that an agreement had finally been signed, they were visibly tired and weary. Ever since they arrived in the capital on 11 August, they had been discussing truce terms virtually non-stop, the final session with the Prime Minister running into more than eight hours. A joke currently doing the rounds in Guwahati is that the agitation leaders and the Prime Minister reached the accord because



Union home secretary R.D. Pradhan exchanges the agreement with Prafulla Mahanta and Bhriгу Phukan as the Prime Minister and the home minister look on: will it usher in a new dawn?

SPECIAL REPORT

both wanted to get it over with and go to bed. Frivolous as it may appear such light hearted exchanges under line the sense of relief the accord brought to many people torn and mauled by six years of turmoil strife and bloodbath. They, too, can now sleep in peace.

In the six years since the anti-immigrant agitation started more than 4,000 people lost their lives, numerous settlements were burnt down and even by conservative official estimates at least 350,000 people were either displaced or rendered homeless. Following the disruption the state government lost revenue to the tune of Rs 45 crores and suffered production losses amounting to Rs 13,000 crores of which petroleum and fertiliser alone account for over Rs 1,200 crores.

This is a rather heavy price to pay for an accord which could have been signed five years ago. Essentially the present agreement is a rehash of what the then Assam Governor, a retired civil servant Lallan Prasad Singh had offered in 1980. Indeed, Mrs Indira Gandhi flew in to Guwahati on 12 April 1980—the Assamese new year's day—amidst great expectations that she had come to sign an agreement with anti-immigrant agitation leaders on the basis of the formula worked out by Governor Singh setting out 1967 as the cut off year for the detection of illegal immigrants in the state. In fact in 1980, Delhi would have got more for much less.

The government version is that an accord could not be signed because the AASU leaders who were willing to accept the formula failed to sell it to their other partner in the agitation, the AAGSP. The AASU and the AAGSP, however, claim that the anticipated agreement failed to materialise because at the last moment Mrs Gandhi repudiated the offer made by the Governor and insisted that she would sign an accord only if the AASU and the AAGSP accepted 1971 as the cut off year. That very day Mrs Gandhi made an unscheduled trip to the immigrant Bengali Muslim majority district of Nowgong and two days later surfaced a rival students' organisation of the immigrants—the All Assam Minorities Students' Union (AAMSU)—at Howli, a small town in Barpeta sub division, about 130 kilometres north west of Guwahati, in the presence of a number of Congress(I) MLAs. This added fresh fuel to an already raging fire.

For months the vast majority of the state's three million Muslims were lying low in fear, full of foreboding. Would they be uprooted



The nightmare massacre at Nellie

again? After taming the virgin soil would they be required to return to the refugee trail? With the local administration openly hostile, they could only bolt the door, keep a nightly vigil and pray for one more day's peace. Then came the green signal from Mrs Gandhi and with active and open encouragement of the state Congress(I) they decided to stand up to the onslaught and fight for their future once and for all. The Assam agitation which began as the last battle of Saraihat (the place where a Moghul invasion was thwarted by the indigenous Ahoms) and a search for identity, soon dissipated into a communal war.

Escalating tension among different communities finally culminated in massacres during the 1983 Assembly elections claiming about 3,500 lives. In a way these insensate killings paved the way for the present accord. For the first time the people of Assam realised they were playing with fire and more important, any one of them could be the next victim. Large scale killings not only gave a bad name to the agitation leaders, most of whom were in jail when they took place, but the initiative of the movement also seemed to be gradually passing on to the extremists. When the leaders were released they had to contend with and eliminate these extremists within their ranks if

they were to remain the pilots. This they could do only by talking truce.

The mood certainly was for conciliation rather than confrontation. The slogans that once brought the people out of their homes to defy the law and face the army no longer excited the people the way it had done earlier. The agitation was already four years old and the stiff, personal price everybody had to pay for it was beginning to tell. The students had been away from their schools and colleges for too long and they wanted to return to their classes. The economy was in a shambles. The tensions and the fears were affecting the nerves. The emerging consensus was that since the agitation's basic objective of focussing Assam's fears and agonies had been adequately achieved there was hardly any point in prolonging the agitation. That an Assembly election could be held against the wishes of the AASU and the AAGSP and a government so elected could function effectively not only reinforced the consensus but also cast serious doubts about the strength and the credibility of the movement.

It was in this background that the AASU leaders met Mrs Gandhi in New Delhi in July 1984 following a series of secret parleys with the then cabinet secretary Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib. The dialogue had snapped on

The Numbers Game

The tension was building up for quite some time. Successive language riots in 1960, 1972 and 1973 carried sufficient hints. Hell broke loose when the then chief election commissioner S. I. Sakhder, at a meeting of the chief electoral officers in Ooty on 24 September 1978, expressed his misgivings about the inclusion of a large number of "foreign" nationals in the electoral rolls of the north eastern states. Referring to an unusually high — 34.98 per cent increase in Assam's population during ten years since 1961 he surmised that much of the increase was due to the influx of immigrants from erstwhile East Pakistan. By this token he calculated that by 1991 the increase would be more than 100 per cent.

The 1971 census puts the percentage of the Assamese speaking population at 59.44 per cent of the total population. The Muslims as a religious group (including both Assamese and Bengalis) constitute 24.56 per cent of the population. Most of the migrants from what is now Bangladesh were showing Assamese as their mother tongue (although it is not) till the 1971 census in order to ride along with the tide and thereby escape possible harassment and deportation. However, after the liberation of Bangladesh these immigrants lost a prop and appeared to be getting more assertive. There was the possibility that they might register themselves as Bengali speaking during the next headcount in 1981.

Finally when in April 1979 the election commission ordered a revision of the electoral rolls for the Mangaldai parliamentary constituency in upper Assam for holding the bye-election necessitated by the death of the sitting Janata Party MP Hiralal Patwari, the tensions of history combining with the problems of the present turned Assam (area 79,000 sq km, population 19,200,000) into a bloody battleground.

During the revision of the rolls objections were raised against some 70,000 names in the 1977 voters list on the grounds of their 'doubtful nationality'. The election commission upholding the objections struck off some 45,000 names from the list. That confirmed the worst fears of the Assamese speaking population, the fear that they had either already become or

would soon become a minority in their own land.

Like any other thinly populated and potentially rich region that is adjacent to an over populated area, a largescale migration was, perhaps unavoidable. The immigration of mostly Muslim peasants from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) began early in the 20th century with active encouragement from both the British rulers and the Assamese landlords who did not have sufficient manpower to till their lands. However by the early Thirties it had clearly assumed an alarming proportion as is evident from the fears expressed by C. S. Mullen, the British census superintendent for Assam in 1931.

Following Partition, a passport system was introduced in 1952 but it could hardly restrict immigration. The pattern, of course, underwent a qualitative change—instead of Muslims, the post Partition years saw an unending stream of Hindu refugees cascading into Assam. The Muslims too came, but in far lesser numbers. Between 1951 and 1960 about 2,20,000 persons and in the next decade another 1,92,000 persons were declared illegal immigrants. Doubts were raised as to the citizenship of some 2,22,000 persons during 1961. And in the following year tribunals were set up in districts containing a large number of immigrants to examine their claims to citizenship. Although about 20,000 people were deported, the landlords who relied on the immigrants for cheap labour and the politicians who benefited from their votes often intervened on their behalf and the tribunals largely proved ineffective. Mass immigration of Hindus and other non-Muslims took place in 1964 following communal disturbances in East Pakistan and again during and after the Indo-Pak war in 1965.

Immigration into Assam during the 1970s was not as extensive as that in the earlier decades when the state's population increased sharply by 35 per cent against the country's 24.8 per cent. About 1,10,000 refugees fled to Assam during the 1971 liberation struggle in Bangladesh and although most of them returned when Bangladesh became independent, an estimated 100,000 were believed to have stayed on in Assam. Subsequently, India and Bangladesh signed an agreement which provided that in

dian citizenship would be granted to immigrants from erstwhile East Pakistan if they had come in before 25 March 1971 (the day the civil war broke out in East Pakistan) and had taken residence in India for at least six months.

The Congress leaders in New Delhi never objected to migrants coming over to Assam and indeed some of them like the late President I. Akhruddin Ali Ahmed and the late Moinul Haque Chaudhury (a member of the union cabinet for some time), actually encouraged immigration as the migrants were a dependable vote bank for the Congress. However in 1978 they voted against Mrs Gandhi. Significantly for the first time as many as 34 Muslim candidates won.

The Janata Party which could get its nominee Hiralal Patwari elected to the Lok Sabha contesting the election on the basis of 1977 electoral rolls was not sure of its ground this time. It feared that a large number of immigrants registered in the list might not vote for its nominee for the second time and so the ruling Janata government in Assam under Golip Barboria acquiesced to the moves to extract a substantial number of Muslim voters from the electoral roll. The initiative for this was taken by the All Assam Students Union (AASU).

These were the circumstances that catapulted the students to the fore. Some regional organisations like Nibaran Bora's Purbim Chaliya Lok Parishad (PJ P), Nagen Hazarika's Assam Jatibatibadi Dal, Khanen Barua's Assam Yubik Samaj and Jatim Goswami's Assam Sahitya Sabha which had been trying hard to get a foothold in Assam politics for quite some time without much success, joined the bandwagon to cash in on the rising tide of resentment among the Assamese speaking population over the influx of migrants into Assam. Finally they came together on 27 August 1979 under the banner of the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and initially tried to persuade the AASU to join them under their banner. But AASU which enjoyed the confidence of a larger section of the people and was far less militant, refused to oblige and as a result the movement acquired two spearheads: AASU and the AAGSP.

T.P.

SPECIAL REPORT



AASU and AAGSP negotiators in Delhi. (l to r) Nagen Sharma, Bhriugu Phukan, Prafulla Mahanta, Lalit Rajkhowa and Biraj Sarma

5 January 1983 after the central government had 22 rounds of talks beginning with the movement leaders and later joined by the national opposition parties. Mrs Gandhi used four home ministers: Zail Singh (now the President), R Venkataraman (now vice president), Narasimha Rao (now defence minister) and P C Sethi in four years but the stalemate continued. The talks floundered again and finally on 12 September 1984 and the AASU leaders, resuming their agitation after a five month freeze, announced that they would not return for any more talks.

When Rajiv Gandhi assumed power, he decided to deal with the problem differently. First, he dispensed with mediators and middlemen. One reason why the talks did not bear fruit was that Mrs Gandhi used too many people at a time to negotiate peace. The result was that they were talking in too many voices giving the impression to the agitation leaders that Mrs Gandhi was not really serious about a negotiated settlement of the Assam problem. If Mrs Gandhi was talking in too many voices she was also listening to too many voices. There were many within and outside her ring of advisers eager and willing to sabotage the talks and prolong the agitation to serve their own interests.

The tug of war between her secretariat and the home ministry to take credit for the success of the talks made matters worse. The first thing that Rajiv Gandhi did was to entrust one official—the union home secretary R D Pradhan—with the task. And the Assam Governor, Bhishma Narain Singh, was chosen to act as a buffer just as Arjun Singh was to tackle the Punjab problem and eventually reach an accord.

His approach, too, was different from that of Mrs Gandhi's. Mrs Gandhi depended exclusively on the classical carrot and stick policy, perhaps more on the stick than on the carrot, to tackle the problem. Her understanding was that since she had the advantage of resources she would eventually win the battle of attrition without giving much away. By playing one community against the other she also wanted to make both weaker and surrender on her terms. Rajiv Gandhi, however, saw that the strategy had proved counterproductive and the only way a breakthrough could be achieved was through a process of give and take. With this in mind, Rajiv Gandhi reopened the dialogue with the movement leaders in February this year in a fresh bid to resolve the Assam tangle.

The movement leaders, especially the dominant partner AASU, having

failed to gain much in six years of violence and disruption, too were looking for a way out. They had other compulsions as well: the national opposition parties which had gone along with them to boycott the 1983 Assembly elections in Assam were no longer enthusiastic about the idea. Even the AASU was convinced that boycotting the election was a mistake. It was this realisation that led the AASU, which had so far been carefully avoiding any identification with politics, to convene a meeting at Jorhat in January 1984 in the hope of uniting all the movement partners into a regional political party to fight the next election in the state whenever it was held. Since then the AASU made several such attempts, the latest being in September 1984, without much success. Nevertheless, these attempts clearly reflected the pressures which were building up on the AASU to seek for a political settlement. These unsuccessful attempts also flashed a red signal indicating that disparate groups making a common cause might disintegrate under pressure.

The very first round of talks with Rajiv Gandhi's confidant Arun Nehru and cabinet secretary Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib gave the AASU leaders enough confidence to tell their colleagues in the executive committee in February that they

'Everything is Over'

AASU president Prafulla Mahanta told SUNDAY

Q There seems to have been some controversy about the cut off date in the initial stages of the final round of talks with the centre. I believe you also received quite a hostile reception from colleagues in Assam when you went back to Guwahati for discussions on 8 August.

A No no there was no controversy about the cut off date.

Q But when you reached Guwahati on 8 August didn't your colleague Lalit Rajkhowa confront you at the airport itself? There were reports that you had agreed to 1971 as the cut off date.

A Some of our friends were agitated but without any reason. The entire talks centred around the cut off date and it took so long because we were not agreeing to 1971. We would never have agreed to that proposal even though the government was pressing us to. Reports that we had agreed to 1971 were circulated by the press, that was never the case. Why would we have held discussions if we had agreed to 1971?

Q How did you arrive at 1966 as the base year then?

A It came from both sides actually. We forwarded it from 1961 and the central government also suggested that 1966 be taken as the cut off year. They knew that if they did not do it there would have been no solution to the Assam problem.

Q What was the last minute hitch on 14 August? People were expecting an announcement in Parliament the same evening.

A Actually we were not agreeing to the interim arrangement. We did not want Saikia in the saddle any more after the agreement. Our position on 14 August was that we wanted President's Rule in the state but the Prime Minister and his aides kept on insisting that President's Rule was impossible to impose. Saikia is the most corrupt government ever (to have ruled) in Assam. The people of Assam do not want him. What is more, we do not recognise his election which was a total farce. So we wanted him out immediately but since the government had agreed to dissolve the Assembly we agreed to have a caretaker government for some time. But that is only a by-product of the whole affair. The main thing is that we have reached an agreement on the real issues. We had to have three different sittings with the Prime Minister and other officials on 14 August for resolving the interim arrangement but then as you know, we found a way out.

Q Your agitation lasted almost six years. Looking back at what has happened in the meantime and the various occasions on which the talks failed, does it not seem to you that the agreement was reached too easily?

A (Smiles) For us it has been a long struggle anyway.

Q But what has made things look so simple this time?

A I think the central government was also interested in a settlement.

Q Earlier they were not?

A In Mrs Gandhi's time things always seemed to go wrong. The officials always spoke in two tongues. They told us something and announced something else. That is not the case with the new government.

Q What does this settlement really mean to you?

A The people of Assam must be heaving a sigh of relief. The era of tension is over. Apart from this the government has agreed to give us fresh economic benefits. The reopening of the jute mill and the paper mill, the opening of an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) branch and the assurance on the oil refinery.

Q Would you say this is the end of the crisis in Assam?

A Certainly. No problem now. Everything is over. We are going back.

Q What about the interim government? Do you have any assurance from the government that if you have any reason to be dissatisfied with their functioning you could do something about it?

A Yes. We can always go to Delhi and lodge a complaint.

Q Do you apprehend that they could be upto mischief?

A Well,

Q What about your own future now that the agitation is over?

A All of us will go back and decide. Let us see.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

hoped the central government would come up with a mutually acceptable solution very soon. Tempered by time and sobered by compulsions, the movement leaders had by then come to the conclusion that even if the government conceded the demand for the deportation of all foreigners, actual deportation would not only take years to complete but was also virtually impossible. The dominant thought was that the movement should not get unnecessarily stuck over a demand that could not be attained. The emphasis therefore shifted to the concentration of energy on a negotiated settlement that would ensure both political and economic supremacy of the indigenous Assamese speaking people in the state even if a bulk of the immigrants stayed on.

After all it was the fear of the Assamese losing their numerical superiority to the immigrants in their homeland that had sparked off the agitation. So if the Assamese could somehow be convinced that they would not lose their numerical superiority which in a parliamentary democracy means power, an agreement could still be negotiated with the centre. The nature of a possible agreement was pregnant in the AASU and the AAGSP camps which started their agitation with demands for deportation or dispersal of all the immigrants who came to Assam after 1951, accepting the 1971 rolls as the basic document for drawing up the future electoral rolls.

Things started rolling at a faster pace after Rajiv Gandhi signed the Punjab accord. Soon after the accord he told his home minister S B Chavan that he would like to see the Assam problem resolved by 15 August, the country's next Independence day. Accordingly union home secretary R D Pradhan began the most crucial round of talks with the AASU and the AAGSP negotiators in neighbouring Meghalaya state's capital Shillong, on 29 July. It was at this meeting that the broad terms of an accord were hammered out. The few remaining differences were largely resolved when the AASU and the AAGSP representatives who had gone to Delhi to lodge their complaints about the electoral rolls with the chief election commissioner met the union home minister on 7 August. On 8 August Chavan flew to Guwahati to ascertain how people might react to different sets of propositions. On the same day the AASU and the AAGSP negotiators returned to Guwahati to brief their respective executive committees on the outlines of the proposed agreement.

When the AASU and the AAGSP leaders left Guwahati on 11 August for a final round of talks in New Delhi, the main features of the agreement were already public knowledge. Rajiv Gandhi's announcement in Guwahati on the following day that a solution to the Assam problem was imminent did not, therefore, come as a surprise. For a time, everything appeared to be proceeding according to a script. But for a last minute hitch over the nature of the government in Assam after the Assembly was dissolved, the agreement would have been signed just as President Zail Singh was told much before his message to the nation was broadcast. The movement leaders were so bitter with Assam's Congress(I) chief minister Hiteswar Saikia that they preferred Bhisma Narain Singh, an active Congress(I) politician till he was appointed Assam's Governor to head an interim government after the dissolution of the Assembly. They had reasons to be bitter. Hiteswar Saikia, who took charge of the state at a very critical time not only challenged the might of the AASU and the AAGSP but also largely succeeded in bottling them up. It was this, more than anything else, that forced the movement leaders to resume a dialogue with the centre leading to the accord.

Rajiv Gandhi did not have any particular fascination for Saikia who had a greater pull with Sanjay Gandhi and Mrs Gandhi but wanted him to continue as the head of a caretaker government recognising his contributions in softening the AASU and the AAGSP. Finally he agreed to meet the movement leaders half way. Saikia, once promoted by Mrs Gandhi as the 'man of the nation,' would stay but with his wings clipped. Even this was unacceptable to the agitation leaders and they yielded only after Rajiv Gandhi told them that if they did not sign an accord he would unilaterally announce the terms in Parliament for the Assamese people to choose from.

It was not just goodwill and trust which won peace for Assam. Both the AASU and the AAGSP were running out of options and they were no longer in a position to dictate terms even to their followers. Since 1983 all the *bandh* calls given by them went largely unheeded. More important, the present AASU leadership, elected in 1979 for a term of only one year, has been continuing in office for six years much to the resentment of their younger colleagues who were feeling thwarted. Many of their prominent members had deserted them. Never before was the centre in

Notes of Discord



Uprooted immigrants from Assam in a North Bengal camp: forsaken

Within three days of the Assam accord, West Bengal alerted all its border posts and police stations along the Assam border against a possible influx from the neighbouring state. The government also intensified its hunt for illegal immigrants by raising the strength of the task force specially assigned to do the job.

West Bengal's chief minister Jyoti Basu feared that a vast number of Bengali speaking people living in Assam would be rendered stateless by the accord. He estimated that over a million would cross over to West Bengal. Reacting sharply to the accord, Mr Basu said "The centre's decision to accept 1966 as the cut off year will spell disaster for lakhs of people. The whole thing," he added, "is absurd." Mr Basu's understanding was that a large number of people in Assam would lose their right to vote and their position would be somewhat like the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Endorsing the view, the CPI(M)'s policy making central committee publicly accused the central government of yielding to "secessionists and chauvinists." The CPI(M) which has considerable political influence over Assam's Bengali speaking immigrant population is the only major national political party to oppose the accord.

West Bengal's ruling Left Front is actually planning to launch a major campaign against the accord by introducing a resolution against it in the state Assembly's autumn session beginning on 2 September.

Barring the Communist Party of India (CPI) all the Left Front constituents share the CPI(M)'s fears and indignation. The CPI, however, favours giving the accord a try.

While euphoria greeted the accord in Assam, minorities were once again uncertain about their future and security. A spokesman of the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) said "We have been betrayed. We have been discarded like waste paper." Indigenous tribals of Assam too, are not satisfied. Said Charan Narjari, the secretary of Assam Plains Tribals Council, the principal political platform of the tribals "The accord does not go deep into Assam's problems and only seeks to protect the interests of Assamese speaking people."

The accord has also brought to the surface the serious schism in the ranks of the anti immigrant agitation leaders with three of the nine party All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) members publicly disowning the accord. Following this and sporadic clashes during the victory celebrations, the euphoric mood died down considerably. While AASU leaders camping in Delhi, dispatched three of their executive committee members to Guwahati to pacify hardliners and advise restraint to people, the government, through the All India Radio and Doordarshan reminded people that orders restricting assembly were still in force even though, under the terms of the accord it was obliged to withdraw them.

T.P.

a better bargaining position. Many in the government including defence minister Narasimha Rao (who as home minister was involved in the negotiations) were convinced that the AASU had run out of steam and would die a natural death if Hiteswar Saikia was allowed to run his full term. The Congress(I) in Assam generally felt that the centre had given a fresh lease of life to the AASU and the AAGSP by reopening

the possibility of the extremists gaining ascendancy and a frustrated population rallying behind them in creasingly for a solution through violence. The centre certainly did not want insurgency to spread in yet another north eastern state. Already certain extremist elements of Assam were in touch with other insurgent groups in neighbouring states. To pre-empt these extremists the centre decided to sign an accord when the

who had been flown from Guwahati by a Border Security Force aircraft earlier in the day to Delhi for their consent to the accord so that they could be present at the Lok Sabha when the Prime Minister made the announcement. Deadlines can certainly accelerate negotiations. However solving problems with a preset deadline in mind is always hazardous since many faults and flaws are likely to be overlooked in the rush to meet the deadline. Since Rajiv Gandhi could not announce the accord in Parliament on 14 August because of a last minute hitch, could he not postpone signing the accord till Parliament reassembled on 16 August? Apparently he had already made up his mind even before the accord had been signed that he would announce it in his independence day address.

As a result the accord is flawed on many counts. First it is against the letter and the spirit of a Supreme Court verdict which ruled that the 1979 electoral rolls were legal and valid. By stipulating the 1971 electoral rolls as the basic document for the next election, the accord puts the clock back. What happens if a person listed in the 1979 rolls does not figure in the 1971 rolls? Or a person who voted in the 1983 elections is denied the right to vote in the next election?

Still worse is the implication in the agreement suggesting that anyone who is listed in the 1971 rolls could vote in the next election but disenfranchised for a period of ten years if at any subsequent time he or she is found to be an illegal immigrant. How can a person who is constitutionally ineligible to vote tomorrow be eligible to vote today? It may so happen that a person having been elected to the Assembly or appointed as a minister is found out to be an alien under the terms of the agreement. All the decisions and the proceedings to which he had been a party would automatically become invalid. Can a government function effectively under such strains?

Even the provision regarding disenfranchisement may not stand the test in a court of law. Under the terms of the agreement persons immigrating to Assam from erstwhile East Pakistan between 1966 and 1971 would be rendered stateless citizens. Under Indian laws stateless persons having lived in the country for five years can apply for naturalised citizenship of the country. India may or may not give him citizenship but his right to apply for citizenship cannot be abridged as the accord seeks to do. The concept of resident alien itself is very obnoxious. The

'Saikia is a Dirty Man'

AAGSP convenor Bijay Sarma told SUNDAY

Q Some people in the AAGSP have expressed their opposition to a couple of points in the memorandum of settlement that you have signed with the central government.

A It was in the interest of the solution to the Assam problem that we agreed to have a caretaker government instead of pressing on for President's Rule. Ideally, we want President's Rule in the state till the time fresh elections are held. We told the Prime Minister that he had *suo moto* powers to dismiss the government and ask for President's Rule as he is the head of the party in power in Assam but he said he had constitutional bindings on him.

Q There is an opinion that you had to accept the terms of agreement as you were yourself losing the grassroots support because of the prolonged agitation.

A Rubbish. That is all government propaganda. We have not lost a bit of support. People in Assam are still with us.

Q Now that you have got an agreement with you, how do you view the future of Assam? Is this the final solution?

A The future of Assam is very good. Things are beginning to clear up now. I would think that Assam is on the rails again.

Q What about the caretaker government and its role in the interim period?

A As I said, we did not want this ministry. The Saikia government's record has been very bad all along. It is he who has never wanted a solution to the Assam problem. Everytime he would sabotage (the talks) for his own personal ends. I really don't know how this interim government thing is going to work out.

Q You met the Prime Minister on the evening of 15 August. What was it about?

A Oh, he had just called us over for tea. He was telling us that we should cooperate in the interim period and that if we had any problems we could always go to him.

Q Are you going to cooperate?

A Certainly not with the caretaker ministry! They are the people we have been fighting all this while and Saikia is a dirty man. We will not cooperate with him.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

a dialogue with them and more important, yielding to their terms.

While Rajiv Gandhi had promised that there would not be any winner or a loser, the AASU and the AAGSP got a better deal when their bargaining position was the weakest. But the government of India perhaps felt that it could strike a better deal with the present AASU and the AAGSP leadership rather than their successors who were an unknown quantity. If the state's fate continued there was

opportunity came.

If Mrs Gandhi was dithering in finding a solution to the Assam problem, Rajiv Gandhi was apparently, in too much of a hurry to cap his success in Punjab with another. He had already set a deadline for an accord and was determined to announce it in Parliament on 14 August. Passes were kept ready for the members of the AASU and the AAGSP executive committees



Victims of hatred: will time heal the wounds?

The Last Lap

Everybody in New Delhi was expecting an announcement on the Assam problem in Parliament on the evening of 14 August. The Parliament House reception had even prepared special passes for the 60 odd Assam student leaders who were supposed to come and hear the proclamation of the agreement. But even as the Parliament and the press galleries waited expectantly, came the news that the "last minute latch" created the previous evening had still not been circumvented. At the time when all were waiting eagerly in Parliament, the delegation of Assam leaders—representatives of both the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP)—was meeting the Prime Minister at the latter's residence. The talks were bogged down over a single issue: what would happen in the interim period preceding fresh polls in the state? The Assam leaders wanted to do away with the Saikia government and have President's Rule but the Prime Minister would not agree. The PM said that he was under 'constitutional bindings' and could not honour the demand of the AASU and the AAGSP. Three successive meetings were held on 14 August during which the two sides kept withdrawing to their back rooms for private discussions. The AASU leaders, according to sources, more or less agreed to have a caretaker government for the interim period but it was the AAGSP that was not giving its consent to the formula. Biju Sarma, convenor of the AAGSP, stuck to his demand till the very end and only "acquiesced in" for the sake of the agreement. It was finally in the last meeting, which began at 11.30 in the night that all the Assam leaders "agreed" on having an interim government till the time of the elections.

The last meeting lasted the longest. At 2.45 on the morning of 15 August, all the Assam leaders got together with the Prime Minister, the home minister, S B Chavan, the union home secretary, R B Pradhan, the union cabinet secretary, P K Kaul and the Assam chief secretary, Mr. P. Tivedi, to sign the memorandum of settlement.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

SPECIAL REPORT



Rajiv Gandhi with Hiteswar Saikia in Guwahati bringing good news

Biharis in Bangladesh or Tamils in Sri Lanka are living examples.

But the most ominous aspect of the accord is the effect it will have on neighbouring states, especially West Bengal and Tripura. A law which is good for Assam should also be good for the rest of the country. But the accord does not recognise this. Under the terms of the agreement any person immigrating to Assam after 1965 is an alien. But in other states having common borders with Bangladesh they are all legal citizens of India. A stateless person in Assam is an Indian citizen in West Bengal. There is no precise estimate as to how many people in Assam are likely to be rendered stateless. It could be anything between 200,000

to 500,000. Since most of them if not all are Bengali speaking the chances are that once they have been rendered stateless and therefore second class citizens in Assam they would inevitably turn to West Bengal or Tripura for insurance. West Bengal or Tripura cannot possibly turn them away as this is sure to affect the political fortunes of the government of the day.

On the other side of the coin is the possibility of the bordering states demanding parity with Assam on the issue of illegal immigration. After all, the problem is not exclusive to Assam. And if all bordering states taking cue from Assam and settle for 1966 as the cut off year the effect can be very serious. Similarly the

provision to dispossess aliens of their land in Assam can only aggravate the tensions. Furthermore, if Assam is entitled to constitutional safeguards for preservation of their cultural and ethnic identity, which means even non Assamese Indians would not be able to buy land or own business establishments in Assam in future, why cannot Orissa claim identical safeguards? In brief Assam's problems have been passed on to the rest of the country.

Even so, an accord is better than no accord. New Delhi's main concern has been to hold an election in Assam. The Lok Sabha polls could not be held in Assam with the rest of the country in December last year because of disputes over the electoral rolls. Even in 1983 Lok Sabha polls could not be held in 12 of the 14 seats in Parliament from the state. The ruling Congress(I) in New Delhi was also aware that although the 1983 Assembly elections brought the party to power in Assam the poll results did not truly reflect the will of the people because of the disturbed conditions under which the elections were held. The rulers in New Delhi, probably viewed the situation in this manner. If an accord could be reached it would create a climate where free and fair elections could be held. Once the elections were held, the Congress(I) would again come back to power, this time with a more convincing mandate. The demographic profile of Assam certainly favoured such a hypothesis and even the most optimistic supporters of the AASU and the AAGSP do not think that together they could win more than 30 of 126 Assembly seats. With all opposition parties joining them they could at best win 50 seats. New Delhi also assumed that once the Congress(I) came to power the accord would be redundant and with the passage of time the wounds would heal on their own.

Clearly this is a very simplistic view of the situation. It does not take into account the possibilities of the realignment of forces and takes for granted that minorities—both linguistic and religious—would stay together and vote for the Congress(I). Perhaps, they would vote more to choose between the devil and the deep sea. But there is no love lost now between the Congress(I) and the minorities. The minorities feel that they had been ditched by the Congress(I) who they supported for their future insurance. The accord can be meaningful only if it can remove the tensions and the fears that tore Assam apart. Implicit at the end of every night is the beginning of a new dawn.



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COVER STORY

Jayalalitha Skating on Thin Ice

Tamil Nadu's filmstar-turned-parliamentarian, Jayalalitha, today finds herself in a dilemma: her diatribe against MGR and other AIADMK leaders in January has put her in a piquant situation. For a while, she even toyed with the idea of wooing the Congress(I). ANITA PRATAP reports on the changing fortunes of the star-politician.

*Four grey walls and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers
And the silent isle embowers
The lady of Shalott.*

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

Jayalalitha nowadays spends her time like Lord Tennyson's lady of Shalott, deliberately estranging herself from the world. There is some curse upon her and like the lady of Shalott she knows not what it

is. All she knows is that it is safer to shun the world, keep her peace and wait for MGR to beckon her to political limelight once again. So the glamorous All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) MP cools her heels in her palatial two-storeyed bungalow doing heaven-knows-what during the endless days when Parliament is not in session, isolating herself from everyone including the retinue of staff in her house. She communicates with her personal assistant and other staff members through intercoms and handwritten messages. They in turn serve as her proxy voices to the outside world.

Press interviews are taboo as she "has nothing to say now." Random callers are told that "Madam is sick" or "out." Of course, a select few are exempt from this routine and are given direct connection to her. Even so apparently, there are not many callers as the

phones are always free. Her grey-and-white house wears an empty desolate look keeping its phantom owner hermetically sealed.

All this is in striking contrast to the scenario two years ago when the actress-turned-politician was firmly perched on the crest of political power. At that time Jayalalitha was besieged by partymen and outsiders who manipulated to ingratiate themselves with her because of her direct

access to the reigning monarch of Tamil Nadu, M.G. Ramachandran. Seven months ago, the situation altered radically and, instead of politicians and favour-mongers, it was newsmen who were forever milling around her house. In January 1985, while MGR was recuperating in New York, Jayalalitha was suddenly divested of her important post as deputy leader of the AIADMK parliamentary party, a post given to her

by MGR. She lost her temper and spewed forth a bubbling lava of calumny, reaffirming that "heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned." The grand dame of Tamil Nadu politics unleashed a vitriolic diatribe against the "coterie of deadwood" in the AIADMK who were out to humiliate and sideline her. She identified R.M. Veerappan, minister for information, as the "king-pin" of the coterie. For days together she held press conferences in her drawing room. Newsmen lapped it up: her inflammatory allegations and impassioned accusations were a refreshing change from the miasma of dull flattery that served as a newsman's daily diet. Instead of the hackneyed paeans of virtue one heard sharp and bitter attacks on the AIADMK luminaries and their shady activities. Jayalalitha staged a show of political wrestling, taking on not



Jayalalitha: no more the queen bee of AIADMK

only MGR but the others as well

She lashed out at MGR's "dubious mental alertness," Veerappan's "black money," Musiriputhan's (president of the international MGR fans' association) "cowardice," V R Nedunchezian's (the Tamil Nadu finance minister) "uselessness," P U Shunmugam's (the then AIADMK general secretary) "jealousy" and Janaki's (MGR's wife) "questionable" marital status. Her fury spent the "avenging Bhadrakali," as she called herself, suddenly went silent. Ever since MGR returned, Jayalalitha withdrew from the scene. MGR was back and, contrary to her fears, was fit, mentally and physically, except for the speech impediment. In disputably, he was in control of the situation, making her look a little foolish. As she maintained a low profile, political observers watched eagerly as to how MGR would go about putting the AIADMK house in order. While the members of the coterie met MGR at his house often, Tamil Nadu's cherished *numero uno* took three weeks to grant an audience to Jayalalitha. And when he did, it was in the secretariat. In the meantime the

coterie was rewarded with positions of authority. Veerappan was reinstated with a few more portfolios, P U Shunmugam was rewarded at first with pro tem speakership of the Assembly and then a ministerial berth. Clearly MGR was not angry with them for "humiliating and sidelining" Jayalalitha. On the other hand, Jayalalitha's chief supporter, S Thirunavukkarasu, suffered a major setback when all his important portfolios were taken away from him. The odds seemed to be weighed heavily against the fading glamour queen. Other than a terse statement directing partymen not to criticise Jayalalitha in public, MGR made no special gestures to the lady. She and a few of her emissaries, who contrived to meet MGR, were all counselled patience. "She must wait," they were told. Six months later, Jayalalitha is still waiting for MGR to lead her out of the shadows of

self imposed exile to political prominence again.

What is Jayalalitha's status in the AIADMK today? Is she back in MGR's good books or has he consigned her to the pages of history? Queries by SUNDAY reveal that MGR will reinstate her but not to the pre eminent position she had once enjoyed in the party. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that MGR will soon make her the propaganda secretary of the AIADMK, a post he made her leave about a year ago. It was his way of clipping her wings for overstepping limits. Without sanction from MGR, Jayalalitha had criticised the Andhra coup that dislodged N T Rama Rao in August 1984, thereby causing considerable embarrassment to MGR.

However, he will now see to it that Jayalalitha is given a prominent role in the party. She had been very good at her job as propaganda secretary. In fact, it was expected that MGR would make an announcement regarding her nomination before he left for Japan. But true to his unpredictable style, he changed his mind at the last minute, making Jayala-

litha wait longer. Naturally, she was piqued. While most people are inclined to attribute the delay to his characteristic waywardness, there is a section in the AIADMK that feels that MGR did not make the announcement precisely because he would be away from Madras for over three weeks. They pointed out that he did not want to give an opportunity to her detractors to start trouble during his absence. A large number of MLAs in the AIADMK owe direct allegiance to P U Shunmugam and R M Veerappan as it was they, and not MGR, who finalised the selection of candidates for the Assembly elections. While no one in the AIADMK would dare defy or rise in revolt against MGR, the latter felt there was no point in arousing their ire by reinstating Jayalalitha during his absence.

MGR's moves are unpredictable, that perhaps is one way of ensuring that his partymen do not take anything for granted. The fact is that MGR was angry with Jayalalitha for her "intemperate outburst." Making her wait was his way of punishing her for transgressing the limits he had prescribed in January 1985.

MGR has always been heaved in keeping the press at bay and it is common knowledge that he is not favourably disposed to his partymen giving press interviews, something which made Jayalalitha totally inaccessible to the press when she was the propaganda secretary in 1983 and 1984. She broke this hallowed edict only when she felt persecuted and needed the press to air her grievances to the public. As far as MGR was concerned, she erred in making the internal bickerings of the AIADMK the subject of torrid public controversy by repeatedly giving press interviews. If she had used the media only to register her protest at her arbitrary removal and behaved with equanimity, MGR would have found it easier to reinstate her on his return.

Four issues that Jayalalitha harped upon during her spate of press conferences infuriated MGR. He was



Jayalalitha serving a midday meal: popular in villages



S. D. N. News Photo Service



S. D. N. News Photo Service



R. M. Veerappan, P. U. Shunmugam and V. R. Nedunchezian critics of the 'avenging Bhadrakali'

outraged when he learnt that she had publicly questioned his mental alertness. This was an act of personal betrayal. It also meant planting the seeds of doubt in the mind of the public and providing fuel to the gossip mill as to whether he was in possession of his mental faculties. Second, he was annoyed by Jayalitha's comments that the AIADMK was not his personal property. A benevolent despot who has a stranglehold over his party, MGR did not take kindly to such lofty democratic notions. As party leader, he was aware that such sentiments if unchecked could create dissensions within the well-knit AIADMK. Third, he was irritated with Jayalitha for running to the centre with her tales of woe. This lent credence to the suspicions in a section of the AIADMK that she was having secret dealings with the centre and that she was passing on information about the party to the Congress(I) in Delhi. Fourth, MGR was furious with her for insinuating that Janaki was not legally married to him. With that comment, Jayalitha crossed all limits of decency. Reinstating her after she made such an outrageous remark would be an act of disloyalty to Janaki, who had nursed him faithfully during his serious illness.

It is an indisputable fact that the illness has brought MGR closer to his wife. He has developed a kind of touching dependence on her. Earlier, Janaki was nowhere by his side when he made his public appearances. Now she is always seen with him in Madras when dignitaries call on MGR. Photographs testify to Janaki's

constant presence by his side even during his trip to the US. Quite understandably, there is no love lost between Janaki and Jayalitha. The latter politician invited for comments have given Janaki a stick to beat her with. An effort by MGR to elevate Jayalitha's meet with stiff resistance from his home unit today, he has to pay heed to domestic opposition. Earlier, it was Jayalitha who stood next to MGR at public functions. On one occasion, like the Asiad for instance, MGR would be thanked by both Janaki and Jayalitha. Now, he has been dislodged from this position. Ever since his return from New York at the personal level, he has been studiously maintaining a distance from her. At the time of electroneering in December 1984, he had promised to return to the voter with MGR. She had implied that they would together do the rounds of thanksgiving. But, as he has not made a single public appearance with her.

But this does not mean that he will consign her to political oblivion. At the moment, he seems to be deliberately infuriating her by making her wait. At one point of time, Jayalitha, maddened by MGR's inscrutable behaviour, threw one of her famous tantrums and decided to leave Madras for good and settle down in Delhi (A house is allotted to her as a MP there). In a fit of temper, she decided to put up her Madras house for sale, wound up her links in the city, allotted her car to Delhi and was all ready for closing the Tamil Nadu chapter and opening a new one

in the capital. But she did not like her house in Delhi and returned to her original residence, frustrated. But she is ambitious; she will not be content having second fiddle in Tamil Nadu politics.

Jayalitha's vision of playing a dynamic role on the national canvas is for the reason that she has been cultivating the Congress(I) leaders, Arun Singh, Arun Nehru and Margaret Alva, so that if she feels she is getting a raw deal from MGR, she could quit the AIADMK and join the Congress(I) and start a new political life all over again in the Congress(I) in Delhi. In fact, there are rumours that she is on the threshold of joining the Congress(I). Jayalitha has always believed in operating at the highest political level and had made considerable efforts to cultivate Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who towards the end of her life had been impressed by her and had come to believe that she was a smart, intelligent and dynamic woman who should be encouraged. Rajiv Gandhi was inclined to share his mother's view. Unfortunately, the rosy relationship with the Congress(I) has turned sour and Jayalitha has only herself to blame. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that the Congress(I) leadership became wary of her ever since her string of brash press conferences in January. While there was sympathy for her because she seemed to be fighting with her back to the wall, political circles in Delhi nevertheless felt she had exposed her immaturity and peevishness. Her overreaction proved that



Governor Khurana, MGR, and his wife Janaki, with Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi at Madras airport

she was not a cool, mature and balanced politician. There was rethinking in Delhi and it was felt that it would be better for the Congress(I) to maintain a polite but safe distance from her. Jayalalitha's predicament is worsened by the fact that the local bigwigs of the Tamil Nadu Congress(I) refuse to take her seriously as a politician.

As the leading Tamil actress of her day, she commanded wealth, glory and fame. But it was only when she joined the AIADMK that she tasted raw power. Having enjoyed it for two years, Jayalalitha now

appears to be overwhelmed by it. She sees no reason why she should not be in a position of authority. She is more intelligent than a lot of others who hold such important posts, she is neither corrupt nor does she have any axe to grind. Her heart is set on the post of deputy chief ministership of Tamil Nadu. Should she fail to achieve this, there is always the option of a cabinet post. She had been pestering MGR to give her at least a ministerial berth long before he fell ill but he has always been disinclined to accede to her wishes. His fear, according to sources close

to him, is that a head swollen with power could go beyond his sphere of control. SUNDAY learns that thus far MGR has been offering her posts upto chairmanship of corporations, posts that have prescribed limits of power. Jayalalitha turned down the offer of chairmanship of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation when she learnt that she would have to give up her Rajya Sabha membership. She is determined not to relinquish her foothold in Delhi. There is no point in foreclosing options. The post subsequently went to Sulochana Sampath.

He has shrewdly neutralised the opposition from the handful of Jayalalitha supporters by making them heads of corporations. For instance, Tiruppur Manimaran has been made chairman of Tamil Nadu Housing Board and J C D Prabhakaran was made chairman of Tubewells Corporation. In the present setup it would appear that Mr Veerappan has moved closer to MGR, who is convinced that he is a strong loyalist. It is interesting to note that MGR allotted the sensitive and crucial home portfolio to Veerappan when he went to Japan and not to Nedunchezian who is number two in the cabinet. When MGR was convalescing after his kidney transplant in New York, Nedunchezian, who was in charge of the home portfolio, had engineered the transfer of the all powerful director general of police, K Mohandas, to an innocuous post. One of the first things MGR did on his return was to reinstate Mohandas. This itself is proof that while he considers Mohandas indispensable, he does not have



Ania Prasad

Jayalalitha campaigning for the AIADMK in the Assembly polls: a vital factor



Jayalalitha, wearing the AIADMK saree, campaigning for the party

the same opinion about Jayalalitha. Due to the diktat Veerappan does not go about criticising her any more. Very cleverly he now chooses to shower praises on her supporters indirectly weaning them away. At a function recently he took care to pay glowing tributes to persons who were at one time known to have been very close to her.

Jayalalitha has no dearth of enemies in the AIADMK but ironically she is her own biggest enemy. She has certain personality flaws that make her unpopular with her partymen. Foremost on the litany of complaints levelled against her by her partymen is her "unbridled arrogance." Her hauteur, air of superiority and disdain make her partymen who find it difficult to stomach it from a person who has been catapulted to power essentially on the strength of her personal relationship with the party leader. That she was good at her job as propaganda secretary seems to make no difference to her hostile partymen who retort that so are a lot of other party members but none have been given the boost she received. Her domineering attitude exacerbates them.

In a way one can understand the reasons for Jayalalitha's arrogance: she is superior to some of the pliant politicians. But as a politician she can ill afford to make public demonstrations of her disdain. In fact prior to MGR's illness the DMK was forever attacking her. His illness brought to the fore the widespread anti-Jayalalitha sentiments in the AIADMK and the AIADMK affiliated papers ran a series of campaigns

against her. With the AIADMK doing the dirty work, the DMK papers realised there was no need to indulge in a slander campaign against Jayalalitha. Her detractors had always maintained that without MGR's patronage she would be nowhere. She disputed such theories—she had even gone to the extent of claiming at one of her press conferences that people in the villages came to see her and not because she was a representative of MGR. But, in the last six months it was evident that, deprived of his patronage, she had fast become a nonentity, a recluse whom the public stopped talking about.

MGR will not totally ignore Jayalalitha because she has her uses. First, he needs her to continue with his balancing act in the party. Like Mrs Gandhi, MGR believes in the divide and rule policy. By giving a slight boost to Jayalalitha he can keep everyone in the AIADMK on tenterhooks, including Jayalalitha herself. Veerappan has reasons to be happy with the way things are going but MGR would like to ensure that he does not become complacent. Jayalalitha's presence will see to that. MGR loves to play guessing games—it serves as a wonderful diversionary tactic, for instance, when Rajiv Gandhi came to Madras at the time of the Pondicherry elections, apart from him, she was the only person in the AIADMK who was allowed to meet the PM. This had the AIADMK partymen running around wondering what was afoot.

The coterie will be forced to be at its best because by default they do not want Jayalalitha to move close to the CM and be his sole confidante

again. Second, as an AIADMK MLA pointed out, 'Why should MGR waste a MP?' If MGR drives her out of the party by ignoring her, his party would lose a Rajya Sabha member. He added, 'In itself it is not a great loss but why should MGR go out of his way to invite it?' Third, he now needs Jayalalitha as the propaganda secretary. He has made remarkable progress in his speech therapy. Unfortunately the improvement is not enough for him to address public meetings as before. The main reason why he went to Japan was to assess whether his speech could be improved further. The AIADMK election campaigns have traditionally been characterised by glamour, mystery and seething millions in an atmosphere surcharged with excitement. As speech is going to be a problem, MGR requires a glamorous crowdpuller. Jayalalitha fits the bill adequately. With the local polls round the corner, he needs an official full-time campaigner urgently who will shoulder the burden of electioneering for the AIADMK. Jayalalitha is bound to jump at the chance and take up her old post.

For two reasons. First, if she is actively involved in the party she has a chance to once again prove her worth and in the process try and restore her relationship with MGR on an even keel. Second, in politics, 'out of sight is out of mind.' As it is, she has not been in the limelight for about six months. She cannot afford to continue to be a recluse if she is serious about picking up the threads of her political career.

Will Jayalalitha Return to 12, Safdarjang Lane?

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya reports on the star-parliamentarian's dilemma

After a long absence, Jayalalitha was seen in Parliament House on 12 August. Her presence was immediately felt in the Rajya Sabha. One person who looked most relieved was the minister of state for parliamentary affairs (in charge of Rajya Sabha) Margaret Alva. In the past few weeks, on the floor of the House, in the lobby and in the central hall, Mrs Alva had been flooded with questions from MPs about the star parliamentarian's absence. In a lighter vein, the minister was heard telling some MPs on 12 August that she wished Jayalalitha came to Parliament everyday. "I will have no problems of quorum," Mrs Alva said. Jokes apart, the capital's grapevine is buzzing with stories about the dilemma which Jayalalitha is finding herself in. She shifted to New Delhi in July. Bungalow number 12 on the prestigious Safdarjang Lane had been allotted to her. She moved in from Madras with 14 cases of goods. The cost of shifting was such that Jayalalitha sold a piece of land to foot the bill. A *pooja* was organised in the new house in the third week of July. A priest specially flew in from Madras for the ceremony. Soon afterwards, Jayalalitha suddenly decided to move out of 12 Safdarjang Lane. According to one version, after the *pooja*, when the priest took some measurements of the rooms and made certain calculations, it was found that the house was inauspicious for her. Whatever the

reason, Jayalalitha moved out of the bungalow and when she returned to New Delhi nearly after a month on 12 August, she checked in at the Tamil Nadu government's guest house in Chanakyapuri.

The last time Jayalalitha was seen active in the capital's political circuit was on 18 July, when she attended a meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee on the department of electronics. The Prime Minister is the minister for electronics and Jayalalitha is said to have utilised the opportunity to send some feelers to Rajiv Gandhi on Tamil Nadu politics. The main theme of the message sent to the Prime Minister was that she was prepared to fight against the rampant corruption of the MGR government and she sought the protection of Rajiv Gandhi in her endeavour.

According to the message sent by Jayalalitha to the Congress(I) high command, the majority of the AIADMK legislators, district office bearers and the cadre were backing her in the crusade against corruption. She suggested that MGR, who was totally in the hands of 'R M Veerappan and Company', be asked to step down gracefully and she be appointed the chief minister of Tamil Nadu. To back up this claim, it was stated in the message that it was Jayalalitha who was responsible for the AIADMK victory in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections and the credit should not be given to anyone else. To elabo-

rate on her importance, it was stated that when she was removed from the party post, a feeler was sent to her to resign her Rajya Sabha seat and someone close to MGR had even offered her Rs 26 lakhs if she were to quit Parliament.

Jayalalitha is said to have complained to Rajiv Gandhi that MGR was out to harass her. She alleged that at one public meeting, when R M Veerappan spoke against her, MGR smiled approvingly. It is alleged by the Jayalalitha camp that MGR has even been telling his partymen that she was no longer with him, so that the AIADMK cadre was alienated from her. The chief minister's wife, Janaki, is said to be the brain behind the machinations against Jayalalitha. Apart from "Veerappan and Company", MGR is alleged to be 'controlled' by Janaki in his day to day functioning as the chief minister, according to the charge levelled by the Jayalalitha camp.

MGR is not the only Tamil Nadu leader against whom Jayalalitha has complained to the Prime Minister. While submitting her blueprint for the changeover in the state, she has cautioned Rajiv Gandhi against relying on the advice of the Tamil Nadu Congress(I) leaders. Her main charge is against the AICC(I) general secretary, G Karuppiiah Mooppanar. (Incidentally Congressmen from West Bengal, Mahabashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, besides Tamil Nadu, have sent petitions against Mr Mooppanar to the high command, complaining about his style of functioning while dealing with matters relating to factionalism in these states.) Even the vice president of India, R Venkataraman (who normally should not be expected to play any role either in state or party politics), has been singled out by the Jayalalitha camp while counselling that the Tamil Nadu Congressmen should not be consulted about the new equations in the state.

Apparently, Jayalalitha is facing heavy odds. She wants to go to Madras as the new chief minister. In the meantime, she is unable to make up her mind whether she should move into her MP's bungalow in New Delhi or not.

36, Poes Garden, Jayalalitha's house in Madras will it become the C M's residence?



'Jayalalitha Has Become Bored with Parliament'

KHUSHWANT SINGH, her fellow-parliamentarian, analyses her performance in the Rajya Sabha



Jayalalitha: superb performance in Parliament

"If she is beautiful she is bound to be brainless," say most men. No one says, "If he is handsome he is likely to be empty-headed." It is a man's world. However high a woman rises in her profession and however able she may be, there is an element of disbelief in her success and her superiority is very grudgingly accepted. In the case of filmstars, opinion is even more heavily gazed against woman. In my time I have known two women filmstars in the Rajya Sabha, Nargis and Jayalalitha, both beautiful and brainy, and one male actor, Sivaji Ganesan. However handsome his millions of female fans find him, I have not yet had a chance of gauging his ability as apart from the heroic manner in which he took the oath when he was

enrolled as a member of the Upper House of Indian Parliament, he has been rarely seen there. And when present he observes a stiff-lipped silence. I have also had the privilege of seeing Amitabh Bachchan in the parliamentary consultative committee of the information and broadcasting ministry. Handsome, he most certainly is. His one speech on audio-

There was a hush of silence when she came to take the oath. She was draped in white, a wraith-like figure and spoke in a soft, barely audible voice... Thereafter most men's eyes were fixed on her because she was good to behold.

visual cassette piracy also convinced me that he had worked hard on his brief and has the gift of advocacy.

Nargis had all too short a tenure in the Rajya Sabha. I had known her for some years before she became a member and had the good fortune of being allotted a seat next to hers. I was the envy of all other male members. Nargis was an outgoing extrovert, bubbling with vitality and eager to make her presence felt. She kept a running commentary going on the debates; if there was a row, she was usually in it. On one occasion a Communist-Marxist lady member who was uncommonly plain-looking was waxing eloquent on the increasing number of rapes in the country. "It is a disgrace that in the regime of a woman Prime Minister (Indira Gandhi) every morning one reads of a rape here, a rape there, rapes everywhere" Nargis piped in loud enough for everyone to hear, "Why are you worried? No one will ever rape

you."

Nargis's premature death by cancer caused genuine grief in the House. She had come to be loved by everyone who knew her.

The next filmstar entrant in the Rajya Sabha was Jayalalitha. Though most of us had seen her photographs and heard about her as a protegee of M.G. Ramachandran and her role in the AIADMK party politics, few of us from the north had seen her on the screen. There was a hush of silence when she came to take the oath. She was draped in white, a wraith-like figure and spoke in a soft, barely audible voice. She got the customary applause as she glided to her seat among her party members. Thereafter most men's eyes were fixed on her be-



Nargis: loved by all

cause she was good to behold

Jayalalitha was utterly unlike Nargis. She was withdrawn, much younger and shyer. She rarely cared to look up or smile at anyone. Her party stalwarts, the all-in wrestler type Mohanrangam and the tall, handsome Ramakrishnan took good care that no one took the liberty of accosting their prized possession. On one occasion when she was absent for the entire session, the ebullient Suresh Kalmadi (Congress-S) tried to raise the question in the zero hour. It had been reported in some of the newspapers that she was being deliberately kept away. Mohanrangam roared back like an angry lion: "What is Jayalalitha to you? Mind your own business." We did.

Unable to persuade any of her party members to introduce her to me, I took recourse to writing about her after I heard her make her maiden speech. It was a superb performance. She had marshalled her facts, phrased them in good English,

her delivery was flawless and without a trace of a south-Indian accent. She took more than thrice the time allotted to her, but neither the presiding officer nor any of the members wanted her to stop. Even so the compliments paid to her in the lobby were uncharitable. "She has the entire Tamil Nadu secretariat at her disposal to prepare her speeches... She is M.G. Ramachandran's showpiece in the centre, etc. Needless to say most of these snide remarks came from members from the south. Any way they were not true. She

wrote all her speeches herself. I gave her the fulsome praise she deserved. That was my introduction card

Thereafter whenever I was heckled by the Congress benches (which was often), Jayalalitha rose to my defence. When speaking on Operation Bluestar, the barracking from the government supporters made it almost impossible for me to carry on. It was Jayalalitha who shouted back: "Why don't you let him speak and listen to what he has to say?"

It would seem that Jayalalitha has become bored with Parliament and is more interested in Tamil Nadu politics where she has become a formidable force and as great a vote-catcher as her mentor, MGR. Her appearances in the Upper House have become rarer and rarer. I will not be surprised if one of these days she resigns her seat to become a minister in MGR's government. Rajya Sabha's loss will be Tamil Nadu's gain.

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The Deals of H.K.L. Bhagat

He rode piggyback on influential leaders and then dumped them on his way to power

Most people who speak on H.K.L. Bhagat begin by quoting what Jawaharlal Nehru had to say of him. "This man," said Pandit Nehru, "should never be allowed to remain in the Congress." The provocation might have been small but Nehru was perhaps aware of what Mr Bhagat was capable of. Harkishanlal Bhagat, then a lowly Congress worker, had allegedly forged the signature of his father and the matter had come to the notice of Nehru. He had the relevant papers brought over to him, examined them and then recom-

mended his suspension from the party. That should have been the end of it but like the good Congressmen Bhagat came back. Rather than in the end it was a beginning. That he has been under darker clouds since but every time he has emerged his status has enhanced. Within a year of his first public indictment, Bhagat was on his way to becoming one of the prominent Congress leaders of Delhi. He started off as a member of the Delhi Municipal Corporation and chairman of the Water and Sewage Committee. The next step up was the post of deputy mayor. When in 1966

the Delhi Administration Act brought into existence the Interim Metropolitan Council under Mir Mustaq Ahmed Bhagat became a metropolitan councillor. Five years later during which time he had already made it to the top in the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, he was an honourable Member of Parliament from east Delhi. A short wait in the wings and Bhagat was into the union ministry where he still is. He has however not abandoned one of his original moorings, the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee and the elected bodies in



H.K.L. Bhagat runs Delhi like a "personal fief"

the city. His vice like grip is only too evident. The Delhi Pradesh Congress(I) Committee (DPCC I) president, Mrs Tajdar Babbar, the chief executive councillor of Delhi, Jagpravesh Chandra, the mayor of the capital Mahendra Singh Saathi, they are all "his people." Even at the middle and lower levels Bhagat has his own confidants manning posts in the Delhi Congress(I) set up.

Bhagat rose up the rungs in Delhi politics the fashionable way. He rode piggyback on influential leaders of the time, then dumped them to catch hold of another one till he himself needed none. He began his political apprenticeship under Chaudhary Brahm Prakash in the 1950s. Till 1966 Bhagat remained loyal to Brahm Prakash. Indeed he owed his position in the municipal corporation to the Delhi leader. But when the Metropolitan Council came into being Bhagat was big enough to play his own games. It is said that he spoke ill of Chaudhary Brahm Prakash to Indira Gandhi and succeeded in foisting Mu Mustaq Ahmed as the chief executive councillor. But a Brahm Prakash continued to hold sway over the DPCC. Bhagat is some of his erstwhile colleagues in the Congress remember began supporting Subhadra Joshi against Brahm Prakash. The game did not pay off at least till the 1967 general elections since Bhagat was not given a ticket. Senior Congress leaders had alleged at that time that Bhagat had worked against the interests of the party in the polls and held him partly responsible for the rout of the Congress in Delhi. During the 1967 elections Bhagat accompanied Indira Gandhi to Rae Bareilly in her poll campaign. It is during this period that he is supposed to have used his proximity to the late PM to his own advantage. After the 1969 Congress split he had already managed to create a situation where Brahm Prakash had to leave Indira Gandhi and join Morarji Desai. But Bhagat still had Subhadra Joshi, who had by then become the DPCC president, to tackle.

But H K L Bhagat brought such divisive political games into play that the Congress unit in Delhi remained faction ridden to his own advantage. After the Bangladesh war, finally, Bhagat got a ticket for the parliamentary elections. As he began gaining in confidence he set about demolishing every rival. By the time the Emergency was declared in 1975, even Subhadra Joshi's roots in the Congress had been uprooted. Bhagat's "Operation Capture Delhi" began in 1973, the year organisational elections were held in the DPCC



H K L Bhagat with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

after a long time. It was the first time that he made his bid to pick the DPCC to his own men and he did it quite successfully. But not according to the Congress man. Janak Raj Jai without resorting to unprecedented bungling. Liked by the way Bhagat had behaved the Congress Lawyers Forum (CLF) which consisted among other the present union minister of state for law H R Bhardwaj began a crusade against him and presented a detailed report to the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the then Congress president Shrikanth Dayal Sharma. The CLF had met around 1,000 Congress men involved in the organisational elections collected their affidavits and submitted it to the leaders for action. Indira Gandhi thanked the CLF for doing the job but even a report was being presented. Bhagat got suspension orders issued against his detractors by the then general secretary of the DPCC Mahendra Singh Saathi. As a protest in anti-Bhagat meeting was held at New Delhi's Imperial Hotel in March 1973. It was attended by three union ministers H R Gokhale, the minister for law and justice Raj Bahadur the minister for shipping and transport and I K Gujral the minister for information and broadcasting. The meeting willfully concluded that there had been large scale manipulations in the nominations for the DPCC elections. Ultimately nothing happened to Bhagat. After that says Janak Raj Jai the DPCC was suddenly deluged with people whom Bhagat brought in to protect his own interests. The story seems much the same even today.

Just before the Lok Sabha elections of December 1984—when the tick et *meela* at the Congress(I) headquar

ters was at its height—Bhagat was chargesheeted by his own party colleagues. It was no doubt the last ditch attempt of a political adversary to wrest the east Delhi Congress(I) ticket from Bhagat. But the charges contained in the memorandum which demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) enquiry and which were submitted in the name of K K Arora who claims to be a close relative of Bhagat make interesting reading. They give a feel of the range of activities Bhagat is supposed to have been involved in. Among the allegations levelled were

- Running a *benami* liquor shop at Fatchpuri in old Delhi which is valued at several crores.
- Has landed property in Haryana worth Rs five crores which is owned either by his family members or *benami*.
- His men established a fake Delhi Development Authority (DDA) office in Trilokpuri Kalyanpuri area in east Delhi and cornered Rs 18 lakhs from innocent persons in 1981.
- In connivance with Sajjan Kumar, a former Congress(I) MP from outer Delhi, Bhagat sold land in the Budh Vihar and Pitampura areas to net a huge profit.
- Got a Rs three crores contract in the name of his son Deepak for the construction of lower income group (LIG) and middle income group (MIG) flats in Ghaziabad.
- Sold off farm lands worth about Rs 25 lakhs in the Trans Yamuna area along with Chaudhary Hargyan Singh president of the east Delhi Congress(I).
- His son owns Deepak Diesel En

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gines, a shop in west Delhi valued at Rs 15 crores and

- Grabbed land in the Trans Yamuna area through his henchmen to the tune of Rs ten crores

Most of these allegations are known to the people of Delhi. The CBI too has on occasions tried to investigate some of these charges but the enquiry have been shelved half way through. This memorandum along with photocopies of some documents is still somewhere in the files of the Congress(I) high command.

Some leaders particularly from the DPCC(I) have unofficially demanded that an enquiry on the lines set up to look into the charges made against the Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal be instituted against Bhagat too. To back up their demand they have come up with more allegations against the union minister of parliamentary affairs and his men.

On 22 June a meeting of the dissident group of the DPCC(I) was held at the residence of the Congress(I) ML and arch-rival of Bhagat, Tejpal Tuli. Perhaps for the first time since the Lok Sabha election Bhagat's colleagues in the party chose to speak openly against him. They were to put a name in their attack on the union minister of parliamentary affairs and unbridled in the exposure of his misdeeds. Bhagat was charged with filling up the DPCC(I) and representative bodies of the capital with his own men who were corrupt and inefficient. One leader present at the meeting also went to the extent of saying that Bhagat had brought criminals into the ranks of the party in order to give them protection. If these people had their way then Bhagat's political career would have ended. But over the years H K L Bhagat has so consolidated his position in the DPCC(I) set up that the high command would have to think twice before bringing about Bhagat's fall.

It is another matter though that Bhagat's men have themselves started coming into their own. They mayor of Delhi Mahendra Singh Saathi has lately been at the centre of a raging controversy which should have made him quit his post. It has been established that Saathi's wife, sons and sons in law have filed false affidavits and indemnity bonds in order to apply for ad hoc factory licences for commercial plots in Anand Parbat. At the height of the controversy when everyone seemed to be gunning for Saathi Bhagat is supposed to have sent 'express instructions' from his hospital bed where he had gone for a gall bladder

operation, that Saathi had to be "saved at all costs." Mrs Tajdar Babbar president of the DPCC(I) has been charged with collecting funds from the sale of souvenirs of the Congress centenary celebrations and not submitting 'proper accounts' to the party. Other members of the DPCC(I) have according to sources asked the Congress(I) high command to enquire into the alleged embezzlement Harveer Singh Harnotia another Bhagat nominated man and a Congress(I) councillor from Yamuna Vihar was thrown out of the party because of his involvement in a case of criminal assault on a girl whom he had promised a teaching job.

Ganga Sahai Berwa a Congress(I) member of the standing committee of the corporation and again a Bhagat protégé is facing a CBI probe for alleged forcible occupation of a municipal store in the Karol Bagh

H.K.L. Bhagat has so consolidated his position in the DPCC(I) set-up that the high command would have to think twice before bringing about his fall.

area. Similarly K C Beniwal was removed from the chairmanship of the Water Supply Committee because hashish was reportedly found in his residence. Deep Chand Bandhu leader of the Congress(I) in the municipal corporation finds himself in a corner because his son has been involved in a criminal case registered against a video library of which he is a partner. The charge is that the library was peddling blue films. What of Bhagat's friendship with people like Kishan Lal and Mool Chand Gupta? The former's residence was raided by the Delhi police sometime ago and crores worth of illicit goods were recovered while the latter is reported to have been hauled up on charges of storing counterfeit money. After his thumping victory in the Lok Sabha elections one of the first functions that Bhagat attended was arranged by Kishan Lal.

Perhaps the biggest success story courtesy Bhagat, is that of a man called Rajesh Yadav, who till a few years ago used to drive Bhagat's car. Rajesh Yadav is now a member of the municipal corporation. What is

more, his fortunes have taken a turn for the better. Bhagat's former driver now owns two houses in Delhi and also has two cars. "Yadav is," says R K Chaturvedi a Congressman from east Delhi "the main contact man of Bhagat. He does most of his jobs and it pays to do jobs for a man like Bhagat. What does Bhagat gain from supporting such men? Why does he do it? These questions still remain to be answered.

There are questions that the union minister of parliamentary affairs has to answer for himself and his son. These concern the allegations that he has grabbed land in the Trans Yamuna he deals with the Bombay filmworld when he was the minister of state for information and broadcasting, and the dubious activities of his son. Talk to people in east Delhi and they would be only too ready to show how "Operation and grab" is still going on in the settlement colonies across the Yamuna.

After the anti Sikh riots last November the credentials of H K L Bhagat had been totally eroded. Areas in east Delhi from where Bhagat is an elected Member of Parliament had been the worst affected. Violence had perhaps been most organised and most brutal there. A report published jointly by the People's Union for Civil Liberties and the People's Union for Democratic Rights had in fact named H K L Bhagat and his henchmen as being responsible for the homicide. Bhagat would not get a Congress ticket for the elections they all said. But he did. Bhagat won with an unprecedented margin. His detractors then said he would certainly not get a berth in the union council of ministers. But came 21 December 1984 and Bhagat's name was read out at the swearing in ceremony at Rahtirapati Bhawan. People have often wondered about this man's secret of staying on top. The clout that he enjoys in Delhi would not be sufficient perhaps. But then he has his friends at the top. Among his supposed backers are Arun Nehru the union minister of state for power and Makhn Lal Fotedar the political adviser to Rajiv Gandhi. At one time Bhagat was working as a clerk for Vinod Kumar Srabhai a freedom fighter. Now, as his own colleagues in the Congress(I) allege he runs Delhi like a personal fief. His son runs a business empire of sorts his family members are regular visitors to five star hotel health clubs he himself should have no great regrets for the kind of life he leads. Whoever said politics is not a paying profession?

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

Have News, Will Sell

Doordarshan opens its doors to private organisations to produce newscasts

Doordarshan finally seems to have shed the possessive attitude with which it clung to its news coverage. After successfully ushering in the sponsored programme era, it has slowly but surely given the go-ahead to outsiders and private producers to produce newscasts. The eventual dependence of Doordarshan on superior news programming is a result of poor programming facilities and the complete absence of broadcast journalists in its monopolistic set-up. Still the hesitant beginning that has now been made to have private organisations feed Doordarshan with hard news is expected to change the complexion of the existing monotonous news bulletins presented by Doordarshan. It was on Independence Day—15 August—this year which coincidentally witnessed the independence of television news broadcasting. On that day the Prime Minister announced the signing of the Assam accord from the ramparts of the Red Fort and by evening Doordarshan had telecast a slick newscast from Guwahati. While to most the Assam newscast seemed unexceptional to most TV watchers it meant that TV journalism had arrived in India.

After years of persuasion, Doordarshan has given the green signal to Independent Television (ITV), a Delhi-based programming company, to sell newscasts to it. The ITV, owned by industrialist Sanjay Dalmia, was set up in 1983 with the purpose of producing programmes for Doordarshan and has among the best equipment and cameramen in the country. ITV signed a contract with Doordarshan on 13 August and will be selling newstime to it at the rate of Rs 50 per second of programme aired. While Doordarshan officials still maintain that ITV would be like any of the other 60 stringers who provide news to Doordarshan from all parts of the country, others have read in the move a disguised invitation to private concerns and industrial houses to make news for them. Though Doordarshan has told ITV that it would primarily demand footage from far-flung places like the north-east where it does not have access to stringers and has categorically stated that editorial rights

would be maintained by it, it is nevertheless a big step forward.

In his letter to the minister of state for information and broadcasting, V N Gadgil, the Prime Minister pointedly complained about the poor quality of TV news. TV news must develop a distinct professional character, news bulletins should be made crisper. They should not sound like press releases, stated the widely publicised letter. Doordarshan re-

sponded quickly to the criticism of the Prime Minister on the quality of news bulletins and it is expected that more and more outsiders would soon be making TV news. Proposals for selling and making newscasts and hard news-based programmes have been piling up with Doordarshan ever since it went commercial in 1976 and opened its doors. Till very recently, the answer to each proposal was the same: Doordarshan was not



Ashok Raina, pioneering TV journalism

accepting sponsored programmes based on news and current affairs. It remained the exclusive preserve of the directorate except for the occasional coverage provided by Doordarshan's stringer or foreign news clips used from Viz News to which Doordarshan subscribes at an annual rate of 60,000 dollars. Now says Doordarshan's deputy director general (news) Shiv Shankar. "Even though we have allowed ITV to enter news on a daily basis this does not mean news is going to become commercialised. However, if there are professional organisations who are willing to give us exclusive coverage then we are open to more suggestions. There is no broadcast service anywhere in the world which can collect news and illustrations from only one source."



V N Gadgil improving quality PH: Yashwanth

Nevertheless, the present contract between ITV and Doordarshan has caused a ripple in the fast multiplying circle of independent programme producers. Some have demanded newscasts at a revised rate when other stringers were being paid a nominal sum. According to Jagdish Kapoor of the Asian Films Company, which has been supplying news to Doordarshan since two decades, there is obvious discrimination in the manner in which ITV has been granted the prerogative to provide news footage. Said he, "While ITV could make over Rs 6,000 every day for a two minute slip, they pay stringers like us only Rs 350 for a mute recording and Rs 175 for a sound recording. What we are irked about is why were not companies like ours contacted by Doordarshan when our proposal to sell news fea-

"There is Nobody Who Can Do News Besides Us"

Ashok Raina, chief executive Independent Television, told SUNDAY

Q When did ITV first propose to sell news to Doordarshan?

A It has taken two years before we could make this breakthrough. There were a series of meetings with Doordarshan and the contract was signed after a long drawn process of rejections and acceptances. The first news feature we did for Doordarshan was a 10 minute programme *The Last Journey* following the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Doordarshan, confronted with such a big story but paucity of equipment and cameramen, approached companies like ours to help it in covering the event. In February 1984 we placed a proposal before the director general and the ministry of information and broadcasting to air special election programmes. Their eventual acceptance was a major step since the programme was aired live and Doordarshan was not in a position to kill it in case something sensitive or provocative was said. The specials—co produced by ITV and Doordarshan for which we were paid Rs 4.25 lakhs—got a tremendous feedback and gave ITV a lot of mileage. It was the first time an Indian TV programme was quoted so extensively by the foreign media. It was the spin off from the election special which got us the present contract of selling newscasts to Doordarshan on a regular basis. The election specials established ITV's track record. It was our scoop story.

Q There have been several proposals lying with Doordarshan from reputable companies to either sell or sponsor news. Why was ITV given the first break?

A There is nobody else who can do news (bulletins and clips) for Doordarshan besides us. Others (who have approached Doordarshan) do not have either the equipment or the software. As far as ITV is concerned it was clear even to Doordarshan that we could not be a stringer like other companies since we were already an established television company producing programmes for them. One such serial *India 2001* again co produced with Doordarshan is to be aired shortly.

So we stuck to our demand and two days before our first newscast was inserted in the 130 newscasts that we finalised the deal with Doordarshan. The advantage was that ITV was ready with the newscast by day it got the go ahead from Doordarshan. Fortunately the Assam story broke and the first time we gave them was from Calcutta. Expecting the announcement of the Assam accord, ITV broadcast a story to Assam a day earlier and the next day we were reporting from there for a month.

Q There have been protests from media organisations like the Delhi Journalists Association that a company like ITV which is owned by an industrial house, being permitted to make news for television.

A Who else besides an industrial house would have the finance to build up studio and programme facilities like ours. By November this year, ITV would have invested Rs one crore in this project. For some programme Doordarshan is still to pay us. The point is why should the electronic news media be any different from the print media. Most of the large newspaper chains are owned by business houses. ITV was the first to get newstime on TV because we were there on the spot at the right time and were the fastest to capitalise on the news format when Doordarshan decided to permit outsiders into its news arena.

Q How do you propose to change the existing repertoire of news on television which has a bad quality both of production and broadcasting?

A American television, it has been said, has initiated the nation. This is what it has to be achieved in India. It is only television which can bring about cohesion and integration in the country. There is tremendous potential to provide healthy information through television and this is what we hope to do in spite of the fact that Doordarshan will control all editorial rights. Till such time when Doordarshan does not have a single reporter or correspondent on its staff, we will be pioneering broadcast journalism.

“

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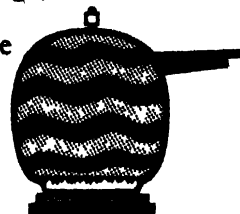
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Opening new vistas in TV journalism: a photograph taken during the inauguration of colour transmission by Calcutta Doordarshan

tures has been waiting with them for years?" He pointed out that even the P.C. Joshi Committee report on television software had suggested to the government that it is media organisations like the Press Trust of India and the United News of India, who have a well-knit news infrastructure, be permitted to enter the television news production field. "How is it now that a private industrial house has stolen a walk and left the others in the cold?" Mr Kapoor demanded.

The Television Programme Producers Guild of India, was one such organisation which has been overtaken by ITV in the race for television newstime. Others who had given written proposals to the director-general and the ministry were Mudra Communications and the Press Trust of India. The proposals of both, says Shiv Sharma, are awaiting clearance. "We will not refuse any one who comes to us with a concrete

suggestion. We are soon to examine other proposals with us." While Doordarshan officials maintained their original stance that they would be considering granting permission to others like Mudra Communications to make newsclips for them on a similar contract, the secretary of the TV Programme Producers Guild in a telegram of protest wrote to the Prime Minister: "We are shocked to know that Doordarshan is handing over contract for TV news to a company in Delhi without giving equal opportunity to other contenders including the TV Guild. This episode happening in a sensitive ministry clearly smells of a major scandal at the cost of all laws of natural justice, equity and equal opportunity." A second protest was lodged by the Delhi Journalists Association (DJA) which passed a resolution expressing "shock over the handing over of the national television service to indust-

rial houses." The DJA has suggested that media men should be allowed to present news bulletins.

ITV and its chief executive Ashok Raina are extremely optimistic of the opportunities which Doordarshan has opened in the electronic news media. According to him, the initiative taken by Doordarshan is sufficient proof that it has changed its rigid stance of not allowing private parties into the restricted area of news programming. ITV itself, he said, has placed before Doordarshan other proposals for news-based programmes, which have not yet been cleared. They were presently negotiating with Doordarshan the terms for producing a weekly newsmagazine. "What Doordarshan has now permitted could well lead to a electronic news revolution. The power of the TV as a news-gatherer will now be fully exposed," he said.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

Taxing Bill

The recent sales tax bill spells doom for the Bombay film industry, reports Olga Tellis

Imagine a day when Hema Malini, Amitabh Bachchan, Rajesh Khanna or hot shot producers like G P Sippy, N N Sippy, Yash Chopra and B R Chopra, all are without jobs! It sounds difficult to imagine but one poster at a recent conference of film producers and distributors read "If theatres close down where will the film industry be? And what will happen to the three lakh men and women who will become unemployed?"

The latest bugbear that threatens to grind the wheels of the film industry to a halt is the sales tax bill passed on 25 July by the Maharashtra state legislature. This is like the last straw that broke the camel's back," said a spokesman of the industry. It also comes in the wake of

large scale video piracy. For instance, says Vikas Mohan who accompanies the police to raid video parlours and libraries "There are 30 to 40 films passed by the censors and ready for release which have no buyers because of the market conditions. The video market is putting theatres out of business."

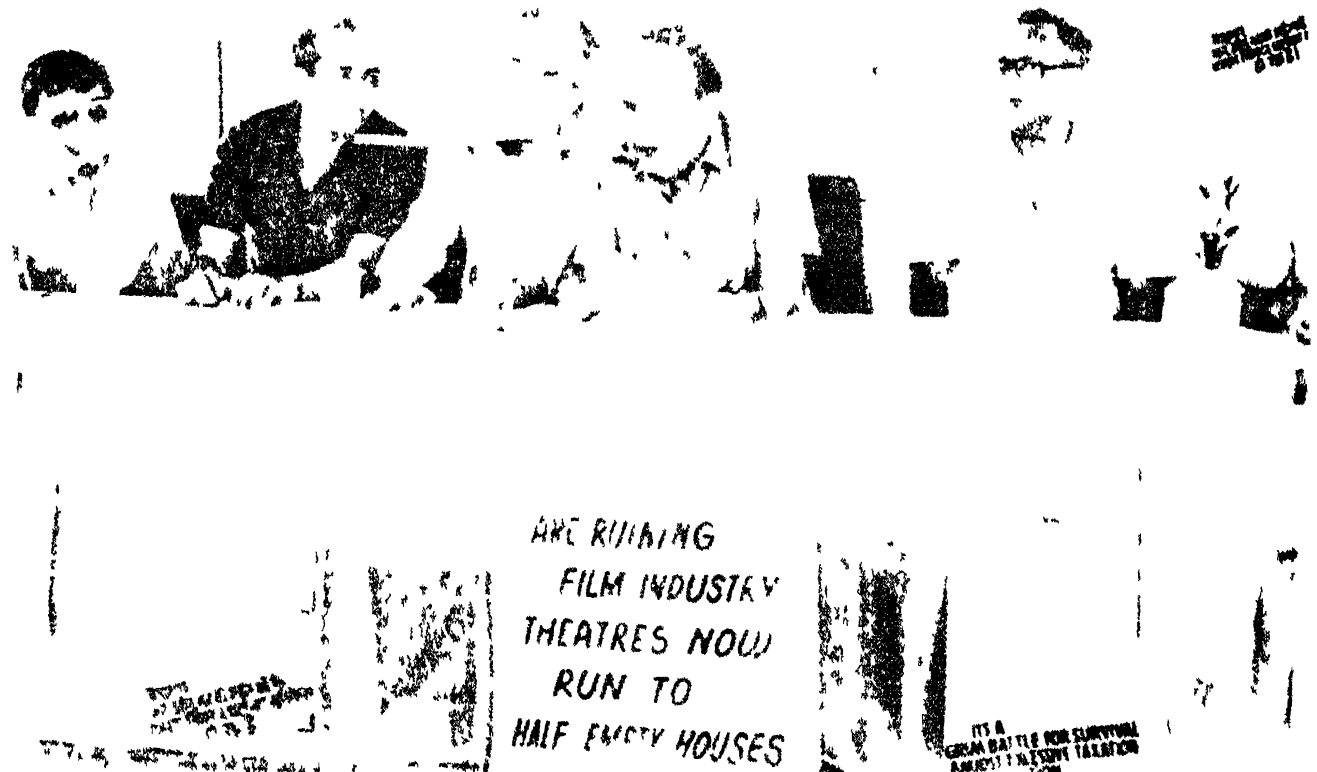
G P Sippy, the industry's doyen and spokesman of the film industry action committee claims that theatres are only 40 per cent full these days. He feels, the industry is already reeling under the impact of the entertainment tax which theatre owners pay to the extent of 175 per cent.

On a rupee eight ticket they pay Rs 5.11 to the government. For the release of prints they pay an exorbi-

tant excise duty already. For instance, if a print costs Rs 50,000 to make, we pay an excise of nearly Rs 18,000. For up to 12 prints, the producer does not pay any excise duty but on every print after that he has to pay. They are not able to release more than 40 to 100 prints because of this when all over the world, between 1,600 and 2,000 prints are released. Besides this, a print for video cassette costs only Rs 250," he added.

The industry had been pleading with the government to reduce the entertainment tax to about 100 per cent. It is estimated that the industry pay Rs 750 crores as entertainment tax which the government gets without investing a paise. They have also been pleading with government and

THEY ARE COMING WITH VIDEO
ALSO IN THE TERM



(Left to right) Prakash Mehra, Atma Ram, N N Sippy and G P Sippy fighting for their rights

the police to put a stop to video piracy by the strict implementation of the Cinematograph Act and Copyright Act. But, it is in vain. According to one source, in Vile Parle police station alone, illegal video parlours survive through pay-off to the police and the powers that be.

The sales tax bill only adds to the difficulty. Explaining the bill, 'Mr Sippy said that it defines a "dealer" as any person who receives cash, deferred payment or other valuable consideration either for commission, remuneration, or for transferring the right to use any goods for any purpose. The state government or the central government which so transfers the right to use such goods and also any society, club or association of persons which so transfers the right to use such goods to its members, are also included in this. Here the word "goods" would mean all kinds of movable property. The bill further says that in respect of the transfer of the right to use cinematographic films or video cassettes, the person who transfers such rights to the exhibitor or user and from whom the exhibitor or user derives the right to make such use shall be deemed to be the dealer under this clause. So the bill would squeeze the industry immensely because, as Mr Sippy says, "Our prints change hands about 100 times because of the inordinately large number of theatres in India. And each time it changes hands (from producer to distributor, to exhibitor and so on), a tax is slapped on to it." In Maharashtra alone, there are about 700 theatres of which 119 are in Bombay. There are altogether 11,000 theatres in India.

Producer, O. P. Ralhan, took pains to give a break up of the number of items on which the industry pays tax which includes tax for raw stock and publicity and a films division's charge. Tax is paid on 26 items which go to buy the material to erect a set. Besides, they pay customs duty, show tax, property tax, newsreel hire charges, octroi, etc. "The sales tax will close down our shutters permanently," he said. To begin with, the industry comprising the theatres, producers, distributors, exhibitors, studios, laboratories, and export and cine workers, went on a one-day strike throughout Maharashtra. "This is only the first stage. Later we will make a fresh representation to the state government—hoping they will withdraw this sales tax. And if they do not respond favourably, we will launch an indefinite closure," said Mr Sippy.

M. Kamath, vice-president of the Indian Motion Pictures Distributors'

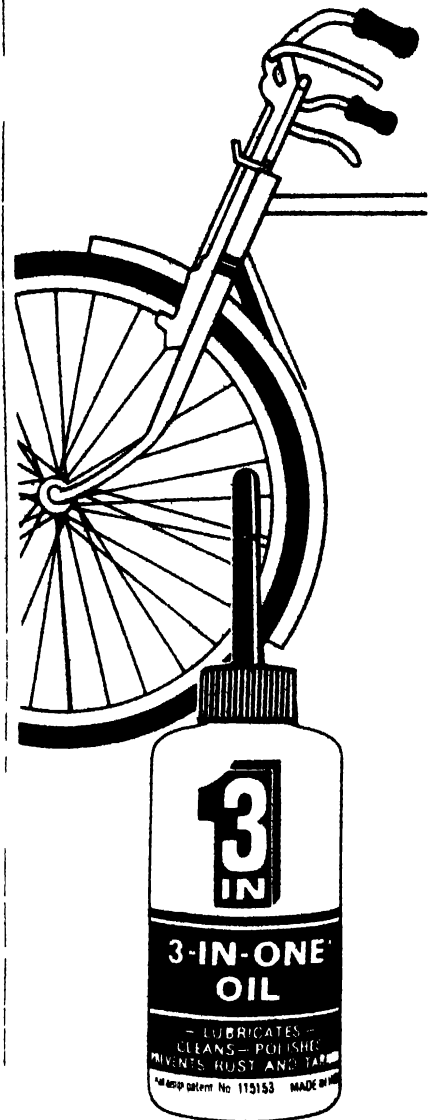
Association (IMPDA), is heading the legal cell which is currently looking into the possibility of challenging the Sales Tax Act. He said that the industry in West Bengal and Kerala have already challenged this successfully in their states and have got an unconditional stay on the operation of the tax and the industry in Bombay is still trying to understand how the sales tax will finally operate, for which, lawyers are being consulted.

Meanwhile, the workers of theatres have agreed to take a 25 per cent cut in their wages, though the Sippys and the stars who are paid in lakhs have shown no such concern for the industry, not having tightened their belts or accepted salary cuts. According to one source, the stars, singers, music directors and script-writers take away 40 per cent of the money in the industry. And they are parasites because this money is not ploughed back into the industry. The stars and others invest their money elsewhere. The money in the industry comes from big businessmen and others who dump their black money into the industry to convert it to white. It is estimated that .02 per cent of the black money is in the film business. This accounts for the inordinate number of flops. According to an estimate, of the 110 Hindi films made last year, only ten to 15 registered a success. The reason is that they are not serious about the quality of the films. They are only concerned about the glamour and respectability that the industry offers. Most filmstars take half the amount that they charge, as black money. A top star for example, who is paid around Rs 35 lakhs allegedly receives most of it in the form of black money. The ordinary workers for whom the likes of Mr Sippy are shedding tears, are treated like dirt. Yet they are the ones who are willing to sacrifice at the industry's moment of crisis.

Producer Atma Ram said, "We are passing through difficult times and it is necessary to see that we do not break our ranks at this moment." However, it is a fact that there are two groups of exhibitors and the industry is divided almost vertically between the big producers who number about 15 and the small, who are much more. The bigwigs hitherto had played a selfish game only worrying about their own interests. In fact, when Mr Sippy wanted to release *Saagar* on video cassettes in order to beat the video pirates, he had to be literally forced to stop doing it, as the industry would lose face when it has been fighting the so-called video menace.

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Brand Oil

A must against rust

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The Meridien Muddle

Former Congress(I) MP Charanjit Singh's ambitious hotel project has received undue favours from financial institutions and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation

The half-page advertisement was prominently displayed in daily newspapers of the capital on 20 July. It carried the promise "of little bit of Paris in the heart of New Delhi," capturing the French bonhomie, recreating the magic of the Seine and reliving the romance of the Parisian pavements for the elite five star hotel-hopper. The advertisement was the only indication that the much-delayed, much-talked about Asiad project, Meridien Hotel, had been partially inaugurated five days ago, on 15 July. Announcements of the hotel's 24-hour coffee shop, La Brasserie, and one banquet hall being thrown open to the public had been made on several occasions but each time there had been a curious postponement. It was understood that the proprietor of the hotel, former Congress(I) Member of Parliament, Charanjit Singh, who had floated the CJ International Private Limited company when he purchased the plot of 4.29 acres of prized land in 1981 was delaying the commencement of operations because permission from the authorities was still awaited. However, after months of hesitation and four years after construction was started, the Meridien Hotel was formally declared open at a small private function before the required mandatory formalities could be completed and without waiting for the no-objection certificate from the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) which leased out the land for the hotel to CJ International for a 99-year period in 1981.

This was, incidentally, the second inauguration of the hotel, which is still far from complete. The hotel continues to pose a threat to the hundreds of guests who visit it since none of the safety prerequisites have been complied with. The first "inauguration" of the hotel was celebrated in November 1982, a few days before the Asian Games, when CJ International had "dedicated 100 Meridien rooms to the Asiad." The Meridien had made history by completing the 100 rooms in a record time of ten months. Even the President, Giani Zail Singh, in his congratulatory message on the occasion had said in the

Meridien brochure: "I am glad to know that the CJ International has completed construction of its Meridien Hotel in New Delhi and will be inaugurated for the Asian Games." The first inauguration had been only an eyewash for giving an air of readiness to the project when the games were round the corner. Hardly were the Meridien rooms utilised for the Asiad: once the sports extravaganza was over, the rooms were no longer available for public occupancy and the hotel was closed for commercial services till July this year.

Ever since the Asian Games, for which the hotel site was allotted in the first place, the Meridien Hotel has been involved in some controversy or the other. Questions have been raised in Parliament about the numerous concessions granted to the hotel because its owner was a Congress(I) Member of Parliament and close to the powers that be. Voices of dissent were heard from other hoteliers that Meridien Hotel was a glaring example of the violations of building by-laws that apply to the union territory and the zone in which it is situated. The latest from the grapevine is that Charanjit Singh, who is no longer a Member of Parliament and is "out of favour" with the ruling party had struck a deal with

none other than the Congress(I) Member of Parliament from Allahabad, Amitabh Bachchan. The story doing the rounds also mentioned that the hotel (on which Rs 56 crores have already been spent for construction) was changing hands. Charanjit Singh was said to be leaving the country shortly after disposing of the half-completed project. Now, at least, with the opening of a section of the hotel for commercial purposes, all rumours of it being sold have been laid to rest. The name of Amitabh Bachchan had been connected with the project, because for some time the star was believed to have evinced interest in the purchase of one of the ten penthouse apartments on the eighth floor of the hotel which are being leased out by CJ International. The filmstar-MP is said to have backed out of the deal because of the various controversies connected with the hotel and because the price of over Rs 1.5 lakh that was quoted to him by the estate agents appointed by CJ International for the apartment was "too high."

Even though the Meridien Hotel project is trailing three years behind schedule and would not become fully operational before 1986, there is hectic commercial activity among the real estate circles of the capital concerning the Meridien. For its owner—dogged by the construction which has progressed in fits and starts and the allegations of misappropriation levelled against him—the project has turned out to be a goldmine. The authorities responsible for ensuring that the bylaws were implemented in high-rise buildings as the Meridien, have chosen to look the other way. A comparison of the Meridien's present plans with that of other five-star hotels offering the same facilities, shows that not only have concessions been made to allow Meridien to violate building norms, but that modifications have been made to accommodate its requirements.

The Meridien is the most expensive hotel project in the country today in respect of the ratio of the covered area and the number of rooms (at the time of the Asian Games the number of suites to be



Charanjit Singh: why was he granted concessions?

built were 450; only 371 suites are being constructed now). When the plot of land was leased out for price never heard of before, the commercial viability of the project was doubted. The plot which is in a residential area was sold to CJ International after limited tenders were invited by the NDMC. The yearly rent CJ International has to pay is 2.68 crores. This is the highest rent ever fixed for a hotel project either by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) or the NDMC in the capital. The other hotel project—Holiday Inn—which was begun for the Asian Games, is being built for the Bharat Hotels and has a larger plot area of 6.0 acres. It was leased by the NDMC for a rent of Rs 1.45 crores every year on similar lease conditions as that made out for Meridien. The only difference was that the Holiday Inn site was situated in a commercial zone unlike the Meridien which was in a residential area.

The most glaring concession that has been given to the Meridien hotel besides the change in the land-use pattern of the project is the high percentage of commercial space that has been allotted. It is estimated that through commercial transactions, the CJ International could earn anywhere between Rs 15 and Rs 20 crores on the building alone. In contrast to the commercial space allowed to any other hotel, the Meridien has been granted a quota of about 33 per cent. Other private hotels in the capital have a permissible commercial area of between five to seven per cent only. The hotel project of the Indian Hotels company which was also earmarked for the Asian Games and which has been operational for more than two years now, the Taj Palace Hotel which has 504 guest suites, in comparison, was leased out for 17 per cent of the profits going to the lessee, the NDMC. In the case of the Meridien it is 21 per cent of the profits or Rs 2.68 crores annually, whichever is higher.

The increased commercial area for the Meridien was possible through a clever manipulation of the lease deal and changes in the original plans which had been submitted by CJ International for approval. In the original plans passed by the NDMC and cleared by the Delhi Urban Arts Commission, the commercial area was shown in the mezzanine floor of the high tower in which a shopping arcade was planned. The plans were substantially changed later and the entire lower portion of the hotel—eight floors—was converted into a commercial tower. In



A view of the Meridien under construction: under a cloud

the sales promotion pamphlet brought out by the hotel, the commercial centre promises to introduce "a new concept in commercial convenience" providing office space in the most prestigious address in town.

The NDMC, in permitting the 33 per cent commercial content in the Meridien hotel project has violated all norms of restricting the commercial use of a hotel site. The revised plans of the Meridien after all the changes had been incorporated were passed by the administrator and chief architect of the NDMC. While the NDMC can permit between seven per cent and 10 per cent for the commercial use, the DDA permits an even lower percentage of commercial area to a hotel. In the revised master plan for Delhi finalised by the DDA in June 1984, hotels are restricted to have between two to five per cent of the total FAR (floor area ratio) for retail, personnel services, shops and commercial purposes. In spite of these norms and the precedence of permitting not more than seven per cent of commercial space, the NDMC did not protest when the revised Meridien plan was placed before them with a multiplication in commercial space. While, according to the NDMC officials dealing with

the case, no decision was taken to disallow the altered plan since the licence deal signed by the former administrator of the NDMC, P.N. Bahl, states that CJ International would be in a position to utilise the other FAR after providing 371 guest rooms, others including officials in the DDA claim that the NDMC should have in no circumstances permitted the land use of the project to be changed for commercial use to such a large extent. Said a prominent architect of the capital: "In permitting such high percentage of commercial use to Meridien, the NDMC has shown its double standards. It is a premeditated move on part of CJ International to alter its original designs and obtain clearance for excessive commercial area."

Besides the obvious manipulation of project plans for commercial benefits, the Meridien Hotel has committed serious violations of certain by-laws which will only be known when the NDMC inspects the premises before giving the CJ International its completion or occupation certificate. According to the chief architect of the NDMC, R. C. Sabarwal, "We would be in a position to check violations committed by the Meridien Hotel when the project is fully

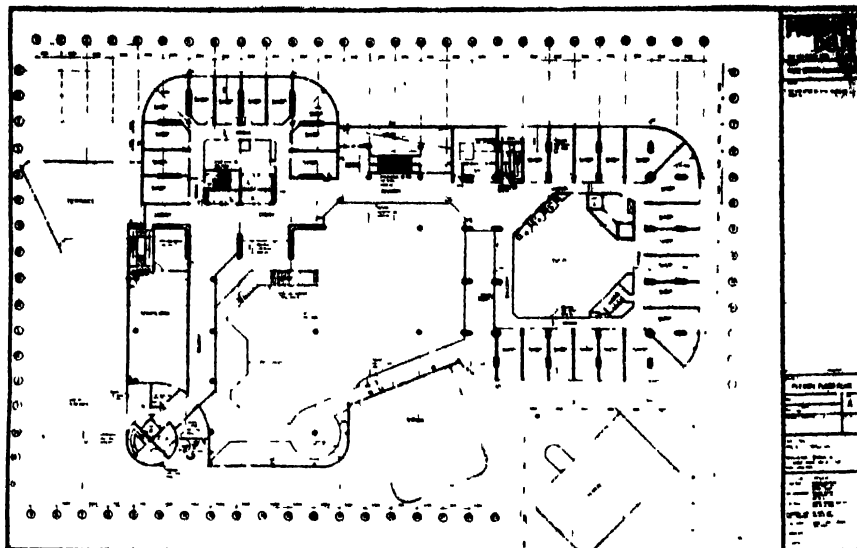
SPECIAL REPORT

complete. Then we could penalise them for any diversion from the agreement they signed with us." According to other architects, some of whom have been involved in the project in its initial stages, the Meridien Hotel has increased its FAR from 150 by an increase in its basement and other built-up areas. Again, the full extent of rules violated by the company would only be known once a no-objection certificate is granted and through the amount of penalty imposed upon the company for such violations. For the present, a few examples of disregard for rules in the construction of Meridien Hotel will suffice:

- Commencement of restaurant and banquet services without the approval of the NDMC and without obtaining the occupation or completion certificate from it. According to the administrator of the NDMC, P. S. Bhatnagar, CJ International had only recently approached them for a temporary occupation certificate and the case had still not been cleared. "If they (the Meridien Hotel) have commenced commercial and banquet services already they have clearly gone against the basic prerequisites of building ethics."

- Hundreds of guests are eating at the Meridien every day without the hotel being in possession of a health licence. According to the chief health officer of the NDMC, Dr R. K. Seth, the licence for every eating establishment has to be obtained under the Prevention of Food and Adulteration Act of 1955. "There is no question of granting a licence to the Meridien Hotel since it has not obtained a completion certificate or even a temporary occupation certificate from the NDMC. Once they do, we will inspect their premises and clear it only if all the conditions of hygiene have been satisfied. If service has already started since 15 July, we have the authority to close down their establishment."

- The Meridien Hotel began operations on 15 July, without a no-objection certificate from the fire safety department. After the Delhi Gopala Towers incident of 6 June 1983, the rules for fire safety in the capital were strengthened. The then Lt-Governor, Jagmohan, had set up a fire advisory committee headed by the chief fire officer, New Delhi, to look into the fire safety precautions taken by multi-storeyed buildings. Even today there are several commercial buildings in Delhi awaiting a no-objection certificate from the fire department. S. K. Dheri, chief fire officer, pointed out that they had received the application from CJ



Floor plan of the Meridien Hotel which has been passed by the NDMC

International for the no-objection certificate, which had been sent for recommendations from the advisory committee. The case was still pending with the committee. "It is the basic rule that no building should be occupied if a no-objection certificate has not been issued by the fire department." It can be recalled that in the case of the Gopala Towers fire, welding in the basement had led to the inferno. In the Meridien Hotel, for example, which has been opened for commercial use when the rest of the complex is under construction, there are chances of a fire breaking out.

- The design of the hotel has been altered in such a way that there is not enough "setback" from Raisina Road. The curving concrete ramp on which the hotel is situated is not only a danger to the traffic plying on Raisina Road but it will also permanently restrict any plans for widening it. It is also believed that because of the narrow setback for the hotel, the road has been reduced in width from 120 feet to 100 feet and that there is a proposal to further reduce the width of the road from the opposite side. Although this proposal had been recommended by the New Delhi Redevelopment Advisory Committee several years ago, it is understood that a 20-foot reduction has taken place to accommodate the ramp of the hotel.

Another factor that has caused grievances to hoteliers is the role of the financial institutions in giving credit to Meridien Hotel. Criticism has been levelled against the role of three public financial institutions: the Industrial Credit Investment Corporation of India (ICICI),

Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) and the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI). The institutions are alleged to have recklessly financed the project, the cost of which has increased from the initial Rs 46 crores to the present figure of Rs 56 crores. It is expected to further escalate to more than Rs 74 crores before construction is completed.

The Meridien project despite the stumbling blocks will be one of the most exorbitant and extravagant hotel projects in Asia. Helped by institutionalised credits, Charanjit Singh has left no stone unturned in importing equipment and in incorporating bizarre designs in the hotel. The Meridien hospitality, which will be so "deliciously French" will include guest rooms with Italian tiles in toilets and electric switches imported from France, capsule lifts with onyx floors and black granite covering the lobby. It will house the country's 200-foot high atrium leading to a spectacular, suspended rooftop night club, which will be the first of its kind in the country. It has been so unusually designed that no brick or mortar is visible to the eye from the outside. The hotel is encased in a beautiful bronze mirrored facade which will be the first curtain wall of its kind in Asia. The Meridien penthouse apartments, one of which has already been leased out to Duke Walia, the Delhi-based industrialist, would certainly be the most exclusive and luxurious in the city. The question is: Should such a delayed project be financed by the public institutions? How long will violations in the project remain undetected and commercial services continue before clearances are obtained?

Ritu Sarkin, New Delhi



Bajaj Tempo Limited. Moving in step with the growing needs of Indian transporters

Bajaj Tempo Limited, with over 25 years of experience in the development and manufacture of light commercial vehicles, is today poised to take a leap into the future – propelled by the achievements of the past.

A leap possible not only because of Bajaj Tempo's own R&D efforts, but also due to its technical and financial collaboration with Daimler-Benz A.G. (makers of Mercedes light commercial vehicles, trucks and cars), the world leaders in automotive technology.

Bajaj Tempo's new Matador F-307 range is fitted with the Mercedes OM616, the most fuel efficient and least pollutant IDI diesel engine. And as a result of Bajaj Tempo's meticulous studies and vast experience, the new range of vehicles is perfectly tailored to Indian load, road and traffic conditions.

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automotive experience in India.**

Does buying a high power mean getting better

An audio amplifier is the heart of a hi-fi stereo system.

Its primary function is to increase the amplitude of an electric signal.

Turn tiny units of energy into something that a speaker can translate into sound.

And, of course, ample power (wattage) lets you fill your room with outstanding musical quality.

Lets you differentiate the gentle tingle of a gymbal... the raspy snare of a drum.

Enables you to hear each violin section, each audible harmonic of a single piano note, or even separate handclaps in a recorded applause.

With its high power output ensuring that the dynamic content of the entire musical spectrum is reproduced without alteration.

A feature extremely important while listening to Indian or Western classical music.

Which is why you need Sonodyne's new 160 watt stereo amplifier: SA 5000.

The one-of-a-kind amplifier incorporating incredible features in one power-packed assembly.

One that has a high power output to fill your room with sound, without your having to turn the volume control to its maximum.

One that has a wide frequency response for reproducing the entire musical spectrum.

One that has a high signal-to-noise ratio to extend the dynamic range.



One with calibrated click-type Volume, Bass and Treble controls for making tonal adjustments to suit your room, speakers, records and tapes.

One with switches on the front dial for playing one pair of speakers at a time or two pairs simultaneously.

One with an advanced electronic circuit for ultra-low distortion and full speaker protection by means of a relay.

One with a separate input for connecting to output from VCR.

One with a pre-amp and switch to connect a moving coil type pick-up cartridge for high quality sound reproduction.

One which when combined with Sonodyne's D 700 stereo cassette tape deck, DP 4000 D direct drive turntable and SA 300 speakers, gives you the best stereo system available in India.

One which redefines the limits of amplifier technology and in turn musical fidelity.

Sonodyne SA 5000.

Sonodyne. The only company harnessing higher technology in pursuit of higher fidelity.

Music always ranks Sonodyne first.

SONODYNE T

wered stereo amplifier stereo reproduction?

And superior engineering, technical innovations, and testing to better stereo reproduction and sound for the listener.

Sonodyne manufactures hi-fi systems other than amplifiers, that have actually changed the standards by which high fidelity is measured.

We make turntables as good as our amplifiers.

Stereo cassette tape decks as good as our turntables.

Speakers as good as our stereo cassette tape decks.

In the years of our audio leadership we've pioneered many important high fidelity "firsts" in the country.

Like India's first 300 watt amplifier with built-in microphone mixing facility — Sonodyne SC 6000.

The first direct drive turntable with gyro-balancing mechanism — Sonodyne RP 4000 A.

The first front-loading stereo cassette tape deck with Dolby noise reduction circuitry — Sonodyne D 700.

The first front-line Speakers, the only ones of their kind in India with

new reflex — Sonodyne "SK" Series Speaker Systems SK 303/606/909.

Sonodyne also has other amplifiers, cassette decks and all your ears.

Our 300 watt stereo amplifier with 300 watts.

Our 300 watt stereo amplifier with 300 watts.

Our 300 watt stereo amplifier with 300 watts.

Stereo Headphones, Stereo Cardoid Microphones and other part of the Sonodyne hi-fi range.

And our systems are closer to your budget.

The high marks of merit go to Sonodyne's R & D, which is constantly engaged in updating technologies.

To give you the most advanced systems of an international standard and transport you to a world beyond pure technology...

to a world of pure exciting sound.

Why not audition all the possibilities yourself? At Sonodyne.

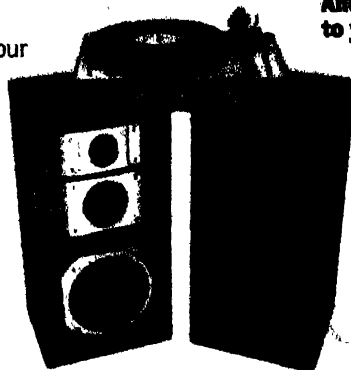
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TELLS YOU ALL

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Selling of America



With imported goods
flooding the
American market,
indigenous
producers are
pitching patriotism
to beat the
competition.
TOOSHAR PANDIT,
after a trip to the USA,
analyses current
advertisement
trends there.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

What is in common between the *National Geographic* magazine, Old Grand-Dad whiskey, Ashaway racket strings, Masonry institute, Chrysler cars and the Pride laboratories? For them all, the salespitch is America. Waving the stars and stripes to promote the sale of merchandise is nothing new. The strategy, almost as old as America, worked well till American pride took a nosedive in the battlefields of Vietnam a decade ago. For some time following the Vietnam debacle, Madison Avenue advertisement agency bosses would not flaunt anything even remotely associated with the American ethos to promote a merchandise as it was evident by then that the Americans hated America. Even the eagle, the flag and Uncle Sam together could not sell a door mat. Patriotism, however, is back in style.

As in politics, so in Madison Avenue, America's advertisement capital in New York, the revival got underway following the Iranian hostage crisis in 1981 when dispirited Americans suddenly found a cause to fight for and salvage their lost pride. If surging xenophobia pushed Ronald Reagan into the White House it also rolled America's advertisement world back to the old theme America. But what really made Madison Avenue sing again to the old tune much more vigorously and far more profitably than ever was the Los Angeles Olympics last year. The Soviet boycott of the Games stirred the American emotions to a degree

where most felt that their pride and prestige depended on the success of the Olympics. The Americans who are naturally introverts went further into the shell: nothing beyond America mattered to them any more.

The Olympics also offered unprecedented reach to the marketeers for their products with almost all American homes watching the Games on

bonanza it promised. Hitching on to the Olympic bandwagon they went for the kill.

"Now American buyers can place orders for American pipe for the American oil and gas industry," declares the Hunt Steel Company in newspaper ads. Chrysler Corporation chairman Lee Iacocca who has become a cult figure in the USA proclaims that Yankee ingenuity is not dead even as he courts the Japanese for collaboration to cut competition. A Chrysler Corporation ad appearing under Iacocca's signature says "Our turbos bring back the power America wants." Another ad carries the punchline "Thank You America." So is the message of America's leading beer producers: Anheuser-Busch Here's To You, America. Power, pride and the prestige for America is the key.

The entire exercise is aimed at cashing in on the new surge of patriotism with American dollars riding high and President Reagan talking tough. The essential idea is to link the products with the consumers' sense of pride and optimism about the future. Buying American saves jobs, cuts imports and strengthens dol-

lars, the thing closest to American hearts. So the charade goes on. Defeated vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro celebrates the land of freedom and opportunities sipping diet Pepsi on the idiot box, major departmental store chains like Sears and Lord and Taylor never let anyone forget the benefits of "buying American," Old Grand-Dad



A Time magazine advertisement: Sprucing up a dream

their TV sets and millions more doing so outside. If the motivation for buying TV time initially was to fund the Olympics and ensure its success, it soon turned into a mad scramble with only the highest bidders succeeding. Madison Avenue could not miss the mood and the

A National Geographic magazine ad, pitching patriotism

whiskey calls itself "the spirit of America"; the March of Dimes sponsors a "walk America" marathon; and designer Perri Ellis comes up with a pot-pourri which he calls the Perri Ellis America collection.

When *Time* magazine survived the libel proceedings brought by former Israel defence minister, Ariel Sharon, one of its ads featured America's most famous landmark—the statue of Liberty—along with the text Liberty—it's worth saving. In yet another ad featuring the same statue, *Time* magazine announced its contributions towards the restoration of the statue, now in progress, reminding people how the magazine is contributing "its most valuable resource: the power to communicate" to "bring honour to all concerned." Indeed hundreds of companies from American Express to American Airlines which have anything to do with the restoration of the statue of Liberty constantly tout their patriotism and generosity to promote their goods and the services.

The statue of Liberty designed by French sculptor Fredric Auguste Bartholdi and a gift from France to the United States is the most sought after hard sell symbol not only because of its familiarity but also because it largely represents what an average American thinks of himself: a free citizen. So Chrysler Corporation cannot do away with the statue in their promotional campaigns, nor the *National Geographic* magazine or the Eastman Kodak. Even such obscure women's magazine like *Family Circle* buys space to advertise its offer of a poster of the statue of Liberty promising that the price paid for it would benefit the restoration project. To a casual observer it may occur that there are not many things America can offer other than a statue which was dedicated by President Grover Cleveland some one hundred years ago. And tugging at patriotism can go to such absurd lengths as *Milwaukee Journal*, published from Milwaukee in midwest America and geographically far removed from the statue of Liberty, invoking the statue to boost its sales. The only thing that Ashaway racket strings has to do with the statue which it uses as an illustration in its ads is that the product is manufactured in the USA.

Yet another attempt to capitalise on the current mood of the nation rather than on the quality is the label—Crafted with pride in the USA—tagged to the garments and apparels made in the USA. A law enacted in September last year and enforced in December makes it mandatory for all apparel and home-

furnishings manufacturers in America to affix 'Made in USA' labels to their products. But the Crafted With Pride in USA Council—an association of cotton growers, fibre producers, textile manufacturers and apparelmakers—have stretched the mandate even further to match stiff competition from the imports, as some surveys indicate that all other things being equal, Americans would buy American. Hence the emphasis is not merely on the product being manufactured in the USA but also on

the pride with which it had been manufactured. Can any proud American refuse the bait?

Edna Einseidel, a professor in prestigious Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University, New York and a perceptive observer of advertisement trends in America, however, feels that pitching patriotism to promote products and services have already gone too far and quite possibly scenes like farmers cheering an Olympic torchbearer (as in Anheuser-Busch com-

**Build more turbos than the rest of the world
if you're out to be the best, you**



Lee Iacocca in a Chrysler ad: a lover of British trenchcoat

SUNDAY SPECIAL

mercials) or slogans like: Let's stick to America (as in the ads for Miller beer) no longer excite people the way they used to. One pointer is that even with such ads almost half of American consumers do not think merchandise produced in the USA are necessarily superior to the imported brands.

Overselling of America, however, highlights some of America's current economic problems. For every \$1, Americans spent last year to buy

goods, 20 cents went to imports, saddling the country with a trade deficit of over \$15 billion. So, vast fortunes are spent to stop the money flowing out on imports but more important to educate people on how to save their dollars by spending them on indigenous products. Commercials rely on quick cuts of laughing people, family outings, backslaps, golden wheatfields, crystal rivers, city skylines and robust Americans singing: American Made. That's the message: buy American and be happy or perhaps

The Spirit of America

Old Grand-Dad

An ad for Old Grand-Dad whiskey: the spirit of America

MADISON AVENUE MAJORS

(1984 billings in million \$)

DENTSU	352.8
J. Walter Thompson	253.9
McCan-Erickson	253.3
Young and Rubicam	247.6
Ogilvy and Mather	206.2
Ted Bates	181.0
SSC & B	153.2
BBDO	144.8
Leo Burnett	141.1
Foote, Cone, Belding	137.6

proud as the people drinking Miller's beer "made the American way" are.

And how much does it cost to keep the eagle soaring again? In 1985 the US advertisement expenditure is expected to reach \$96 billion and according to studies by McCan Erickson, the worldwide advertisement takes should reach a staggering \$874 billion by 2000 AD, almost half of which would be spent in the USA. Proctor and Gamble—a groceries and utilities chain—spends \$8 million on advertisements annually and McDonald's which gave America its hamburgers (nothing to do with Hamburg) is facing competition from Burger King which plans to spend \$250 million in advertisements this year.

America obviously does not come cheap. Even then the Americans, exposed as they are to high-voltage hardsell campaigns, may not be as enlightened. For instance, a study made by Broder and Gazdeg, a research organisation, in 1983 indicates that many Americans believe Atari is a foreign company (it's American), BMW is manufactured in America (it is not) and Canon cameras are made in USA (it is not). But even more disturbing is the fact, as another study shows, that Americans do not necessarily buy American, simply because it will do them proud. Patriotism may not always translate into dollars. Five years ago Ford tried the prescription and failed. When it comes to value, pride and patriotism take the back seat.

There is no denying that Americans are more interested today than ever in buying American products. But then, as *New York* magazine's columnist Bernice Kanner points out, even such ardent protagonists of "Buy American" campaign as Lee Iacocca wears a plaid-lined very British Burberry trenchcoat while he delivers his line.

China's Road in Nepal

The Chinese have recently bagged a global tender for the construction of a highway in Nepal—within a stone's throw of India's northern border—at an unbelievably low price Bhola Chatterjee finds that the Chinese exercise is motivated by considerations other than Nepal's economic development

In theory, there is nothing wrong with China's extravagant enthusiasm for bagging the global tender Nepal had invited for the construction of the Kohalpur Banbasa road in the country. The project is to be jointly financed by the World Bank and the Saudi Development Fund, earmarked for developing countries. Nepal and China being sovereign states, it is entirely their affair to decide how they should go about what concerns them. If for a change China chooses to play the Good Samaritan offering to build a stretch of road in Nepal for a song, it should not give rise to any controversy.

That is true, but only up to a point. India would have had no occasion to take notice of it if the proposed road were not to run within a stone's throw of the Uttar Pradesh-Nepal border. The proposed highway would run more or less parallel to the Aksai Chin road China had surreptitiously built in the 1950s. There is more than one reason why India should be perturbed at China's unusually generous response, to the Nepalese tender for the 204 km Kohalpur Banbasa segment of the East-West highway (Mahendra Rajmarg) 304 km of which India had earlier constructed. Beijing's offer to build the road at a cost "not even sufficient to cover material costs of the project, leave alone that of the machinery or the profit margins" left almost every Nepalese political observer speechless. They found it hard to explain why China had decided to "grab the project at a considerable loss." China offered to build the highway at an unbelievably low cost of Rs (Nepalese) 41 crores; the second lowest bid was South Korea's Rs (Nepalese) 48 crores, while India proposed to do the job for Rs (Indian) 51 crores, the official rate of exchange being Rs 100 of Indian currency for Nepalese Rs 145. While India offered its agent Ravi Bhakt Shrestha of Northern Enterprise, two and a half per cent commission to execute the road building work, China allowed him seven and a half per cent. This is yet another curious

aspect of the whole affair.

Ordinarily, no one would question Nepal's right to determine who should be invited to undertake a given road building project in that country. The only disconcerting point is that this particular scheme has a bearing on the security of India's northern border. That being so, if India feels upset about China's involvement in the proposed Kohalpur Banbasa road project, it would be wrong to dismiss it as a case of imagining problems where none exist. How far that matter, would China react if India had offered to construct a road, say from Mustang in western Nepal to the Nepal-Tibet border? The rulers of China presumably would not have felt gratified at the prospect of India adding a few kilometres of all-weather road to facilitate commerce and communication between otherwise inaccessible hamlets along the Nepal-Tibet border.

China's zeal for securing the tender for the Kohalpur Banbasa highway is not the only instance of its interest in undertaking development projects in the Nepalese Terai region adjacent to the Indian border. It may be mentioned that in 1971 pursuant to a Nepal-China agreement, China had embarked on a survey of this area to explore the possibility—of all things—of cotton cultivation. Nothing could be more preposterous than this, and India was in no mood to be humoured by the prospect of having a crowd of Chinese on a supposedly altruistic errand so close to the border. The idea had to be abandoned when India took strong exception to this. Knowledgeable sources could not be talked out of their suspicion that the entire exercise had been motivated by something other than consideration for Nepal's economic development.

A series of events have taken place in recent times which apparently indicate a certain change in the scope and content of Nepal-China relations. Last September a trade pact was okayed between the Tibet autonomous region of China and Nepal. About six months later, in

March 1985, China and Nepal agreed to open the Tibet-Nepal border to foreign tourists. The agreement allows selective crossings between Zham in Tibet and the Kodari region of Nepal. China also agreed "in principle" to open Lhasa to Kathmandu by road as well as permit an air link between the two cities. Throwing open the Nepal-Tibet border closed since 1949 when, according to the late Zhou En Lai, "the Chinese central government helped the serfs who constituted 94 per cent of the Tibetan population to win their emancipation" is indeed not without significance.

In contrast to this, Indo-Nepal relations today cannot be said to project a picture of cordiality and understanding. Of late there has been a noticeable tendency on the part of both New Delhi and Kathmandu not to play down the points of disagreement between them. Of course India being the larger of the two neighbours, its reaction to Nepal's stance on certain issues has been reasonably controlled. But the same cannot be said about Nepal.

On various international issues, Nepal and India seem to hold mutually exclusive views. For instance, Nepal's stand on the Afghanistan and Kampuchean issues, which is diametrically opposed to that of India, is largely in agreement with the Chinese viewpoint. On the other hand, not a few Nepalese who matter have reservations on India's policy towards the Soviet Union, which is believed to be more than accommodating Nepal's diplomatic exercises in recent years. Sent to suggest that it is in league with Pakistan and Bangladesh to rig up an *entente cordiale* of sorts with China as its patron. In a pointed reference to the India-Nepal trade and transit treaties, the Nepalese foreign minister, Mr. Randhir Subba, recently observed in the course of an interview: "If someone came to earth from the planet Mars and (were to) go through these treaties he would find them akin to the type of agreements that the Americans, for example had forced on the (Red) Indians."

And Kathmandu feels that New Delhi has not done justice to it regarding utilisation of Nepal's water resources, currently in the process of being harnessed along the India-Nepal border

For some time now it is being said that Indian settlers in Nepal, particularly in its Terai region, are complicating matters and may eventually pose a threat to the kingdom's peace and security, let alone economy. It is bandied about that if corrective measures are not immediately taken Nepal might be saddled with a Sri Lanka type of ethnic problem. India's refusal to subscribe to Nepal's theory that all its problems of peace, security and development would be resolved if it is recognised as a "zone of peace" is said to be another proof of New Delhi's lack of understanding of Kathmandu's point of view. Nepal seems to believe that the 1950 India-Nepal treaty of peace and friendship, supposed to be weighted in India's favour, is one of the major reasons for India's reluctance to appreciate the logic of the peace zone proposal which has been supported by 48 countries including China.

Much is being read into the 1950 India-Nepal treaty. Not a few Nepalese in high places seem to locate in this India's "expansionist" political culture blissfully forgetting the context in which it was concluded. In fact, the basic idea behind Kathmandu's insistence on New Delhi's acceptance of its peace zone formula is that this would automatically invalidate the 1950 treaty. For understandable reasons Kathmandu does not like to be reminded that the circumstances in which the 1950 India-Nepal treaty was signed were abnormal. Time was then out of joint in the high Himalayas and in the autumn of 1950 China occupied Tibet. Indeed, Kathmandu felt relieved when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared that "any transgression of the Indo-Tibetan border would be resisted. The same principle," he said, "would apply to the Nepalese-Tibetan border."

Mutual understanding and appreciation of one another's viewpoint underlined India-Nepal relations at that time. The late King Tribhuvan was in agreement with India's perception on Nepal's international relations.

The succession of Mahendra to the throne, after the death of his father King Tribhuvan, marked the beginning of a process of change in Nepal's foreign policy. The late King Mahendra was persuaded that India's "expanding influence" could be neutralised by improving relations with Chi-



Nepal's late King Mahendra with former Chinese leader Mao Zedong

na. After he took over in December 1960, snuffing out the kingdom's nascent experiment with parliamentary democracy and incarcerating Prime Minister Koirala along with most of his cabinet colleagues and a large number of Nepali Congress activists, King Mahendra reverted to the pre-Rana foreign policy. The essence of this policy was that "whenever relations with the British reached a critical stage, the Nepalese did their utmost to dramatise their relationship with China to the British." Substitute India for the British and one gets the point.

To put things in their right perspective it may be recollected that during Prime Minister Koirala's visit to China in March 1960, Zhou Enlai offered to build a road connecting Kathmandu with Kodari on the Nepal-Tibet border. But Prime Minister Koirala declined to accept it on primarily economic and secondarily political grounds. It is another matter that King Mahendra, during his 1961 visit to China, agreed to the Chinese proposal to build the 104 km Kathmandu-Kodari road, the Arniko Rajmarg, which was completed in 1968.

Koirala refused to give countenance to any argument that contradicted his understanding of Nepal's geopolitical compulsions which should determine its relations with India and China. During an interview

with this correspondent he observed: "It is our perception to be very friendly with China. There must be clearly understood that there are greater complications in being friendlier with India than with China. Of course, India has demanded that we must be friendly and adopt a hostile attitude to China. But we must also remember that whatever happens in India does not affect us to the extent that events in Delhi do and that is because we belong to South Asia. It is not really surprising that we are closer to India than to China. The mistake of the Mahendra regime, and this also applies to the present government, was that it wanted to pursue a policy of playing one against the other. In the long run such a policy does not pay."

This is precisely what Kathmandu would do well not to lose sight of. Kathmandu would have no occasion to regret if it avoids doing anything that might create an impression that China influences its policy on India. But if it does adopt such a policy, it would neither serve the long-term interests of the palace nor that of the country. In the given context, it is essential for the palace to refrain from such manoeuvres as it might adversely affect its role as one of the most important integrative agencies in the kingdom.

Football in the Island of Turmoil

East Bengal top the Central Asian zone in the Asian Club Championship in Colombo



The East Bengal striker misses an easy chance to score against Sri Lanka's Saunders

After months of uncertainty about holding the tournament in a strife torn nation and hectic lobbying for a change of venue the Central Asian group league of the Asian Club Football Championship ended on a happy note for one and all—particularly for the organisers the Board of Control for Football in Sri Lanka (BCFSL) and champions East Bengal from Calcutta. It was a victory for both for the organisers it was a victory over financial constraints and adverse publicity ("We wanted to show to the world that all that was being written about our country is not true. We are not living in Lebanon. By hosting this championship we have been able to show the world that we are living quite normally here"), for East Bengal, it was a victory over all other teams in nearly every department of the game. With this, the club extended its supremacy in the game to the Central Asian zone, which it will represent in the final round of the championship in October.

East Bengal (which got ten points) earned the unique distinction of not only winning all its five matches in the group league but also finishing without conceding a single goal, having scored 20, the highest in the competition. It was followed in the

table by Abahani Kuria Chakra of Bangladesh (eight points), Saunderson Sports Club of Sri Lanka (5), Pakistan International Airlines (4), Nepal's New Road Team (3) and Valencia from Maldives with no points.

The second clash between East Bengal and Abahani—billed as the final which decided the fate of the tourney proved to be the best match of the championship. Except for this match Abahani had won all their other encounters and frankly was a better side than East Bengal on the

fateful day it did everything but score a goal. East Bengal won 1-0.

The pattern of football in West Bengal and Bangladesh is more or less similar. The clubs from the two countries share a lot in common too. The players of both team follow much the same style with individual displays aplenty. They are largely amateurs and semi-professionals. Both clubs spend lavishly on their players (with budgets totalling lakhs and above. Abahani spends about 25 lakhs in Indian rupees annually) and can boast of the best talent in the countries. In fact they were the only two teams in the championship with players who are well paid.

The second East Bengal Abahani clash produced reasonably good football. The tactical play rose to appreciable standard. East Bengal depended more on counterattacks to generate moves while Abahani relied on aggressive play bringing the East Bengal defence constantly under pressure. The Bangladesh players also laid the off side trap for the East Bengal forwards very often. East Bengal was lucky that on three occasions Abahani forwards hit the goal post and failed to score. On numerous occasions goalbound shots taken from inside the East Bengal penalty box struck defenders by

East Bengal's Monopri Dey scores against Valencia



sheer accident. The Calcutta players had their chances too. On a few occasions, when they did break away from the offside trap, they found the goal open in front of them, but missed. The solitary goal which decided the fate of the encounter was scored by Debashish Roy in the third minute after the breather.

The Calcutta club did not face many problems in the other matches. In their first encounter they humbled NRT 7-0, beat PIA 2-0, trounced Valencia 9-0, and Saunders 1-0. Abahani, on the other hand, beat PIA 3-0, NRT 2-1, Saunders 4-1 and Valencia 8-1. Saunders beat Valencia 7-0, NRT 2-1 and drew 2-2 with PIA. The match between PIA and NRT ended goalless. While NRT defeated Valencia by six goals, PIA beat the Maldives team 6-1.

No player from East Bengal performed consistently well. There were some good displays and sparks of brilliance. In the last match of the team against Saunders, it was the stopper Tarun Dey and the linkman Bikash Panji who excelled. Dey finally bagged the best player's trophy for his performance in the match. Sudhip Chatterjee shone only in patches. Biswajit Bhattacharya worked hard at the game until he left the field with an ankle injury. And of course, Debashish Roy, who scored seven goals in the meet, including the vital one against Abahani, played very well. However, in the last match, in his enthusiasm to become the top scorer of the tournament, he missed five easy chances. Had he made use of them, East Bengal would have romped home with all the trophies in its kitty.

Coming to the individual performance of the players, the names which first come to mind are R Premlal, the central striker of Saunders and Sheikh Aslam, the central striker of

Abahani. Both scored nine goals in five matches and vied for the top scorer's trophy. Both these players, especially Premlal, showed that they are good opportunists and have striking ability. Premlal, by virtue of his performance in this tourney, has already got an offer to play for Abahani in Bangladesh. If he goes, he will be the fourth Lankan to play for Abahani, the other three being goalkeeper D. Chandrasiri, defender Packeer Ally and Asoke Tavinson.

The only other forward to really impress was Ghulam Sarwar of the

respondent had seen Bhadra playing much better than he did in this tournament in the pre-World Cup matches in Dhaka. Bhadra, who has just joined Abahani this year, was perhaps taking his time to adjust himself to the new surroundings.

In the defence, it was Packeer Ally and Sultan Janny, both of Abahani who impressed the most. Ally was the main source of inspiration to his players in the defence and was finally responsible for trapping opponents offside. Under the bar, Saun-



A Debashish Roy header, in front of the Valencia goal

PIA. The nippy left-winger was a constant menace to his opponents throughout the championship. It is a pity that he did not get much support from his colleagues, otherwise he could have been far more dangerous. Besides scoring two wonderful goals against Saunders, he created quite a few chances for his colleagues in the other matches. In the middle, three players caught the eye. Asoka Ravindran, Ashis Bhadra both of Abahani and Mani Shah of NRT. But more was expected of Ashis Bhadra. This cor-

ders' keeper, Sujith Emantha had a fairly good tournament.

The tournament owed a great deal to charity. Except for the team from the Maldives, all the other visiting clubs, namely Abahani Krira Chakra, East Bengal, NRT, and PIA did not have the finances to participate in the tournament. Some of the clubs had to face serious problems on this account. Valencia had to organise a musical show to raise money; Abahani sought the help of donors in Dhaka and East Bengal had to appeal to its members for contributions. Help eventually came from various sources, the West Bengal government, the All India Football Federation, the Indian Football Association, the Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club. Even the organisers of the championship were desperately short of funds. "All we had was the assurance of our Prime Minister, Mr Premadasa, the Sports minister, Mr. Vincent Perriera and other government officials," said the chairman of the BCFSL organising committee, F.A. Yaseen. "Our expenses were taken care of by the Rs 60,000 we got from the government mainly due to the interest shown by the PM who is a keen follower of the game."

Sarajit Deb, Colombo

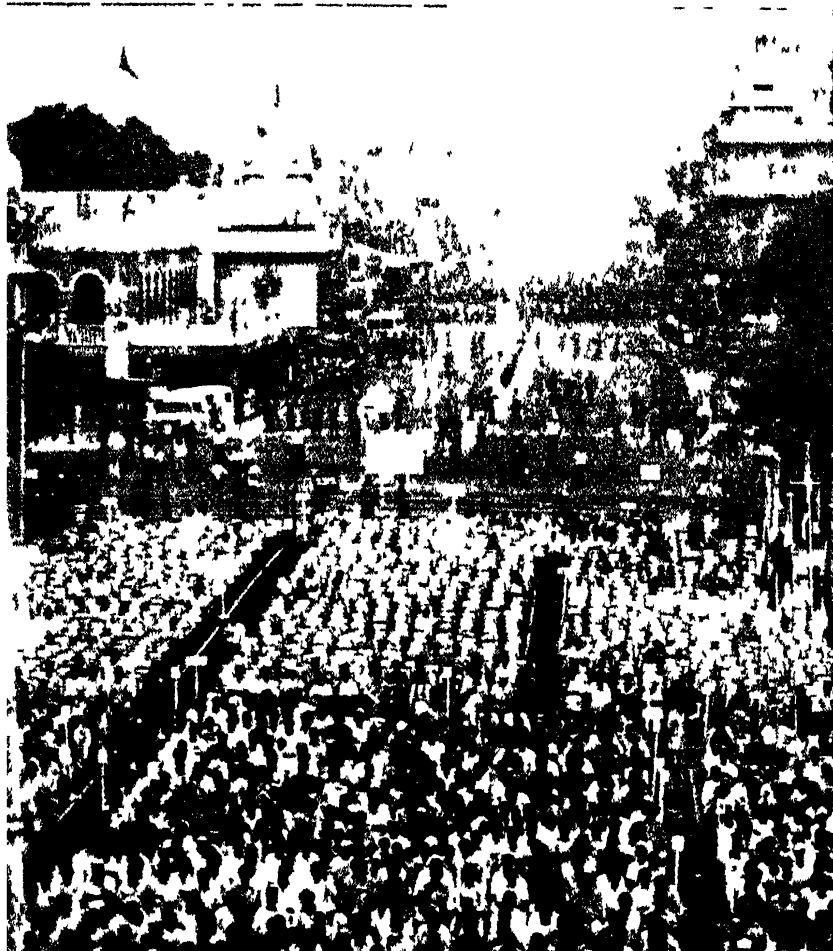


PHOTOFEATURE

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's I-Day

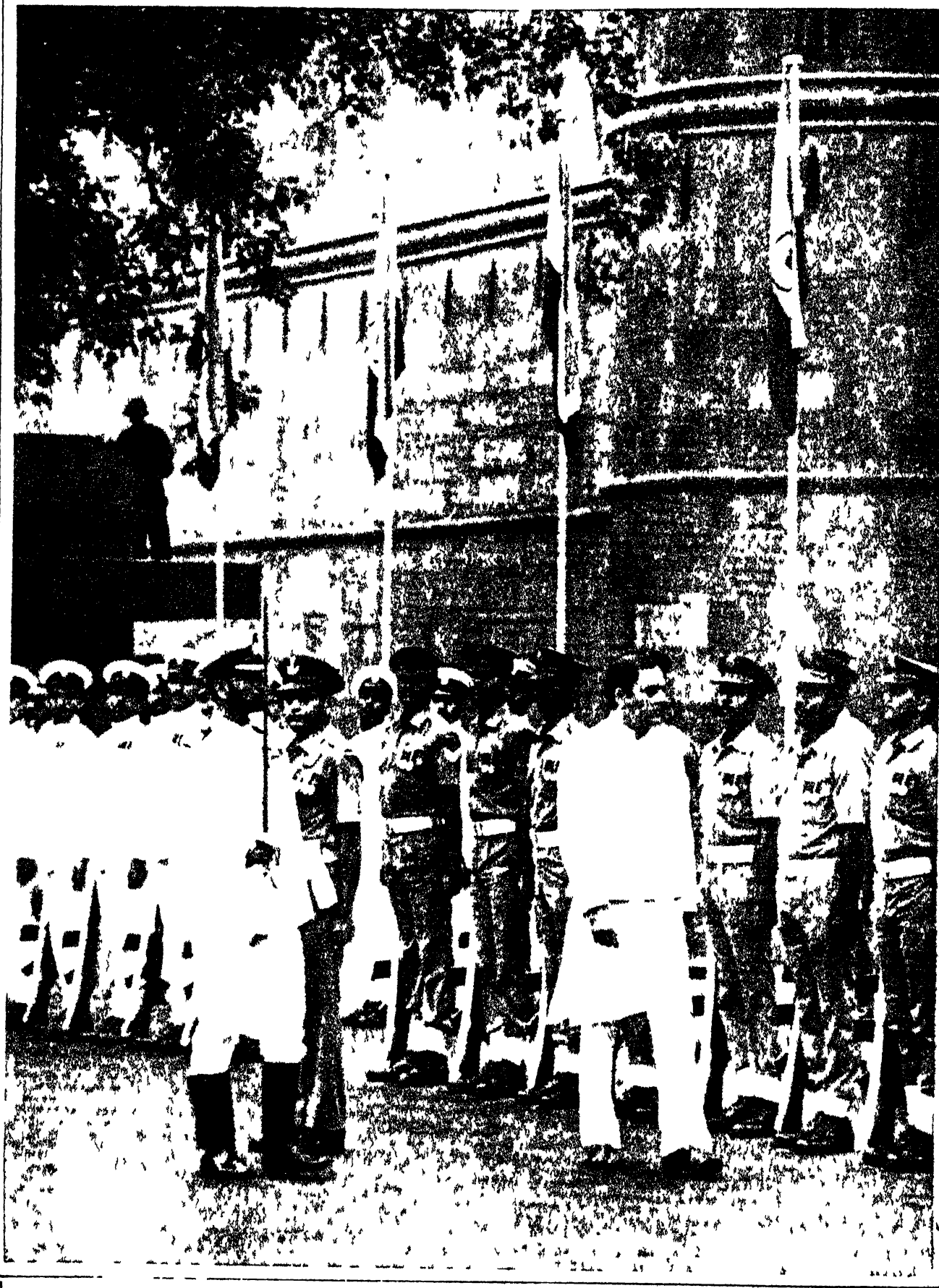
Photographs by Sondeep Shankar





Unprecedented security arrangements marked the 39th Independence Day. The Prime Minister stood behind a bullet-proof glass panel while speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort (facing page), all cars were thoroughly searched before entering the parking enclosure (above), a vast security barrier up to the Esplanade separated the public on Chandni Chowk from the official enclosures. The last rows were kept empty (left).

PHOTOFEATURE





(Facing page) A black dungaree-clad commando keeps vigil from the walls of the Red Fort while the Prime Minister inspects the inter-services guard of honour. (above) accompanied by wife Sonia, Rajiv Gandhi comes down from the Red Fort ramparts after the ceremony

PUNJAB

From Hussainiwala to Hussainpur

Elections are announced; the accord is put to test



The PM and Sant Longowal sign the Punjab accord. Looking on are V.P. Singh, Balwant Singh, N.S. Barnala, Arjun Singh and S.B. Chavan

When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi undertook the journey to the border town of Hussainiwala on 14 April, no one could have imagined that he would return to Punjab within two months, after assuring peace to the state and address a mammoth rally at Hussainpur on 17 August, heralding the announcement of the date for the elections. The journey of the peace caravan from Hussainiwala to Hussainpur has been remarkable. The very fact that the union government does not want to extend President's Rule in Punjab beyond October is a positive development. The state Assembly, which was kept in a state of suspended animation since October 1984, was dissolved after the expiry of its five-year term on 26 June 1985. If President's Rule in Punjab was required to be extended beyond 5 October, then amendment to the Constitution of India would have been necessary. Despite signing the accord with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Akali Dal president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal had suddenly put a spanner in the works by stating in an exclusive interview granted to the Chandigarh correspondent of the Press Trust of India (PTI) on 14 August that he favoured the postponement of elections in the

state to February 1986.

The government may have wavered on the issue, but there was one person who was adamant that popular rule had to be restored in Punjab by the first week of October. This man was Governor Arjun Singh who, after having effectively brought the peace settlement, was keen that his efforts towards the revocation of President's Rule in the state should not receive any setback. It was the insistence of the Governor of Punjab which played a vital role in the announcement of the election date, 22 September, by the election commission within hours of the Prime Minister's return from Hussainpur, where he had gone to lay the foundation stone of a railway coach factory.

At Hussainpur, a triumphant Rajiv Gandhi recalled that he had promised a coach factory to Punjab when he came to the state four months ago. He praised the railway minister, Bansi Lal, for having located Hussainpur in Kapurthala district as the site for the plant. This production unit of the Indian Railways, initially, was to have come up in Uttar Pradesh. Amitabh Bachchan (and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna's) constituency, Allahabad, was one of the possible locations of the factory. The alternative to Allahabad was Ballia, the home dis-

trict and the constituency of the Janata Party president, Chandra Shekhar (he lost the last elections to the Lok Sabha). Suddenly Allahabad and Ballia had to forego the project because Punjab had to be appeased. While laying the foundation stone at Hussainpur, the Prime Minister also announced that 5,000 people from Punjab would soon be recruited to the various para-military forces under the union government. The martial race legend was boosted. The government did not stop at that, almost simultaneously it was announced that the army would turn "reformist" and a lenient view would be taken of the 900 deserters who were facing trial. Apparently, the government of the day was bending over backwards to buy peace today (oblivious of the repercussions tomorrow).

Apart from the Congress(S), whose general secretary, K.P. Unnikrishnan, has openly welcomed the announcement of elections in Punjab, the opposition is confused about its stand. The Akali Dal will participate in the elections, despite the reservations aired by Longowal in the PTI interview. The memorandum of settlement signed on 24 July will now be put to the litmus test.

A Special Correspondent, Chandigarh

MEDIA

A Government Afraid of the Press

Newsman go to court against a violation of press freedom

Often talked about as the essence of a democracy, the freedom of the press is something which in India has remained largely undefined. While there have been black Acts and bills—particularly the Vernacular Papers Act of 1871 banning 'seditious' writing under British rule and the Bihar press bill—which have sought to detail what the press can do or should not do, there is hardly any law specifying what the press can do. A recent writ petition filed in the Calcutta High Court by two journalists of the *Anandabazar Patrika*, the leading Bengali daily, against West Bengal's minister for local self government Prasanta Sur, the administrator, Calcutta Corporation and others, promises to be vital for the freedom of the press in India. The judgment will decide the right of a journalist to enter places of public importance and witness and report matters of public interest.

The petition came in the wake of what journalists in Calcutta believed to be an unprecedented violation of their right to report when 141 newly elected councillors had assembled in the central municipal building to elect seven aldermen on 15 July, newsmen who had turned up to report the election—being held after 16 years and hence an important event—were pushed back from the gates, roughed up and chased away by a large force of *lathi* wielding policemen. The fact that accredited journalists have always been allowed to witness internal elections of the corporation in the past did not matter. The police had clear orders to keep the press out.

The incident took the local news papers by surprise. None of them was told of the orders in advance, and the sudden display of hostility towards the press led to momentary confusion. But the government remained unrepentant and the press, bitter. The minister for local self government, Prasanta Sur, who had personally supervised arrangements for the poll, came under severe attack. Defending his orders, he said that the reporters and photographers were not allowed in even on the strength of their accreditation cards as outsiders might have slipped in along with them. "We have nothing

against the press," he added apologetically, "but only wanted to ensure a smooth poll." The deputy commissioner of police (headquarters), Calcutta, Subimal Dasgupta said he had clear instructions to allow entry only to the councillors holding certificates of election from their returning officers (the councillors' poll was held in the city on 15 June) and a few employees who perform essential services. The newsmen were unconvinced.

As if this was not enough, on 18 July, Prasanta Sur said that he did not think the press had any business to be present when "the mayor and the chairman of Calcutta Municipal Corporation are being elected" inside the council chamber on 30 July. Reporters and photographers would not be allowed inside the chamber for the brief period when the election would be held "only to avoid corruption," he explained. The newsmen would need special cards to enter the municipal building, on 30 July and would be allowed to witness and photograph the oath-taking ceremony the reporters would be briefed before and after the election, he said.

The statements caused an uproar. Two journalists from the *Anandabazar Patrika*, Ashish Kumar Ghosh and Aloke Mitra, took the matter to court, seeking legal protection of their right to enter the building to witness the mayoral election. Press freedom, they said, involves the em-



Prasanta Sur under attack

ployment of the necessary means to exercise it. As journalists and members of the public, the petition said, "they are constitutionally present at the meeting scheduled to be held on 30 July 1966 at the annual election of the mayor." Petitioners are entitled to write reports and take photographs of the election and to publish the same and to disseminate news information in view of the relation thereof to the public through the media in direct or indirect manner. It is contended that the police, without the sanction of the government, cannot prevent the representatives of the public from media from entering the municipal building to attend the election on the time of election. The petitioners also cite Article 19 of the Constitution of India that guarantees the right of access to the public places during the election.

Replying to the petition, the administrator of Calcutta told the court that the central municipal building was not large enough to accommodate more than the elected members and their families along with the police force required for the election. He also said that the Chairman of the Corporation had

The administrator on a definite administrative discretion as to the number of persons allowed to enter the municipal building for election. He said that the members of the Corporation could ask for and obtain an order from the Corporation to enter the election building on the 30th day to witness the election and to take part in the election.

Needless to say, the petitioners have a strong case with regard to the effects on the growth of the right of enquiry, free speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution. It will have to be decided whether for all what is at stake is the issue of civilisation and democracy. Ghosh and Mitra petitioners say "Liberty of the press is a part of the freedom of expression and is a cornerstone of the civilisation."

Nirmal Mitra, Calcutta



Forensic experts examining bloodstains at the site of Maken's murder

DELHI

The Hunt for Lal Singh

Delhi police pay heed to eye witness accounts

Police officials investigating the brutal murder of Lalit and Gitanjali Maken on 31 July may have found the vital clue they were looking for: of the five key witnesses to the killing, two have come up with vital evidence about the scooter borne murderers whom they had watched for over 20 minutes.

Top police officials investigating the brutal murder of Lalit Maken, the young Congress(I) MP from south Delhi and his wife Gitanjali, explain: these two witnesses have given them the relevant information about the physical features of Lal Singh. One of them recollected clearly that there was a "one inch-long deep scar below the little finger near the wrist" on the hand of one of the alleged killers. This information was said to have been given to the police by the witness on his own. As a result it is being considered all the more relevant. Taking up the lead, the Delhi police is understood to have contacted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who have also spread out their dragnet for Lal Singh after the Kaniska crash. Their records too state that one of his identification marks is a deep scar on his wrist.

The witness had a chance to go near the man with the scar and even spoke to him mistaking him for a security man. The other witness is a vegetable-seller who makes the rounds of Kirti Nagar where Lalit Maken's parents live and where he was gunned down. The vegetable vendor recalls two men standing near the house when he came to the Makens on his morning round. Lalit Maken's sister-in-law is understood to have come out to buy some vegetables from him. While she was taking

the fruits and vegetables one of the men is said to have remarked in Hindustani "*Achcha mal dena. Bade ghar ke liye hai*" (Give good quality vegetables as it is meant for a respected family). This indicates that the men were not scared. Nor were they trying to lurk or hide.

These two witnesses besides being able to give a clear description of the persons, picked out Lal Singh's photograph and identified him. The police claim that the two persons were shown 200 photographs of diffe-

rent men on the wanted list when both of them singled out Lal Singh's picture. Reliable sources maintain that the two witnesses were called by police commissioner Ved Marwah and only after he had personally "cross-checked everything" with them, did he give the green signal to break the news that Lal Singh was a suspect.

The ballistic experts report has also given a lead. According to the report, the bullets that hit Lalit Maken were fired from the same weapon that was used for the murder of Harbans Singh Manchanda, president of the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, in March 1984. The report further states that the same weapon was used for the killing of Rajya Sabha Congress(I) MP V.N. Tiwari, in Chandigarh. Both the murders were committed, within a fortnight.

The Delhi police have found that Lal Singh, who hails from a village near Kapurthala, has no family ties in India; he left his homeland seven years ago. His passport was issued from Jalandhar. He speaks Punjabi, Hindi and English well and is wanted by the FBI, the Canadian Police and Interpol. Lal Singh's last address is known to have been in Flushings, New York. According to the Canadian Police he was last sighted in Vancouver where he was working as a mechanic in a garage.

Rashmi Saksena, New Delhi

ANTULAY TRIAL

Awaiting a Verdict

Will A.R. Antulay be found guilty?

On 2 September 1985, the former chief minister of Maharashtra A.R. Antulay will either walk out of room no. 13 of the Bombay High Court a free man, or wait to hear the special judge sentence him to what could be seven years in jail. Justice Dinshaw Mehta, the special judge conducting the trial of Mr Antulay is to deliver the judgment in the second of the two cases filed against him by the former MLC of the Janata Party P.B. Samant. The first case filed by the former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator Ramdas Nayak is still incomplete as Mr Nayak has appealed to the Supreme Court against the inadequacy of charges framed by Justice Mehta who had upheld only 21 out of 48 charges of Mr Nayak.

In the P.B. Samant case, Mr Antulay is facing two charges under Sec-

tion 5(1)(D) of the Prevention of Corruption Act and a charge of cheating under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. Under the Prevention of Corruption Act to be read with 5(2), Mr Antulay can get a maximum of seven years and a minimum of one year. On 24 July and 8 August, Justice Dinshaw ruled that there was a *prima facie* case for framing charges against the former chief minister for obtaining Rs two crores for the Indira Gandhi Pratibha Pratisthan (IGPP). He said that the accused had obtained Rs ten lakhs from the government of Maharashtra in the name of the IGPP by corrupt and illegal means and by abusing his office as chief minister. There was a *prima facie* case for framing charges under Section 5(1)(D) of the Prevention of Corruption Act punishable under Section 5(2), of the same Act.

Mr Antulay had also obtained Rs 1.90 crores from the government treasury in a similar manner, the Judge said.

On 8 August, Justice Mehta framed an additional charge of cheating under Section 420 of the IPC. The Judge said that in his capacity as chief minister, Mr Antulay, fraudulently or dishonestly induced the cabinet and the two houses of Legislature to deliver to the IGPP a total sum of Rs two crores. The prosecution counsel, Vijay Pradhan, had earlier argued that he used the premises of his office as a venue for duties other than his official one. This he argued was against the law. He had also said that the office of the chief minister was irregularly and improperly exercised for obtaining money for the IGPP, in an excessive and extravagant manner to promote the interests of the IGPP, to give advantage to the IGPP in a manner inconsistent with the duties of the chief minister and for unlawful and wrongful use to procure pecuniary benefits for the IGPP. Mr Antulay had asked for the sum of Rs two crores and for the disbursal of Rs ten lakhs from the contingency fund for the corpus of the trust.

The counsel for Mr Antulay, R.D. Ovalekar, said that the grant given by the state government was approved by the cabinet and Legislature and no court or outside authority had the jurisdiction to challenge the decision of the elected House. As far as abuse of power was concerned, Mr Ovalekar submitted that it had to be proved in the light of non-compliance of procedures to ascertain the extent to which Mr Antulay was responsible. He said that the chief minister was not a party to the request for Rs 25 lakhs for the IGPP which was made by the department for cultural affairs. In fact, Mr Ovalekar said there was no real evidence to show that Mr Antulay was individually responsible. Mr Ovalekar also argued that the prosecution should show the acts that influenced the cabinet into sanctioning funds for the IGPP.

In the Samant case, Mr Antulay pleaded for an early end to the legal tangle which had dragged on for four years causing him "mental torture." It may be recalled that P.B. Samant had filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court in September 1981. The petition was disposed of by Justice B. Lentin on 12 January, 1982. Mr Antulay subsequently filed an appeal against Justice Lentin's order which was dismissed by a division bench of the High Court comprising Justice Desai and Justice Rele. Mr Antulay then filed an appeal in the Supreme Court and this too was



Antulay: hour of reckoning

dismissed. On 10 February 1983, P.B. Samant filed the present complaint before the special court of Justice Mehta.

In the petition before Justice Lentin, Mr Samant had accused Mr Antulay of collecting donations from the National Centre for Performing Arts and the Indian hotels and of malprac-

tices regarding the races held by the Royal Western India Turf Club, the granting of no-objection certificates to Nanubhai Jewellers and the allotment of cement to builders. He also stated that he had "personal knowledge" in respect of the "acts of cheating by the accused in the sugar cooperatives." An interesting fact that came to light during the present hearing was that P.B. Samant is a big builder. On his own admission during the cross-examination by Mr. Ovalekar, he had received 200 tonnes of cement for his various cooperative housing society projects from the Maharashtra government during November 1980—May 1981 during which time Mr Antulay was CM. Strangely, Mr Samant had told Justice Lentin that he had applied for five bags of cement and this was not granted by the state government, but had failed to tell Justice Lentin about the 200 tonnes of cement he had received as a builder. During the previous regime of former chief minister Vasantdada Patil, Mr Samant had been allotted 30 hectares of land for 324 cooperative housing societies of which he was chairman.

Olga Telle, Bombay

CRIME

A Detective in the Dock

Chief of premier private detective agency is accused of theft

Could the chief executive of the country's largest private detective agency be guilty of petty theft? The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently charge-sheeted Prem Kumar Jindle, managing director of the Globe Detective Agency (GDA) with theft of jewellery worth £10,000 stolen from the baggage of a co-passenger on an Air India flight on 29 October 1982. Three years after Scotland Yard had released Jindle on bail for want of evidence, the CBI has begun a fresh probe. According to the accused person, he has been "framed" and false allegations have been made to malign his company, which has an annual turnover of Rs three crores in an attempt to sabotage some of the criminal investigations the GDA was handling in the United Kingdom.

According to the charge-sheet submitted in the court of the chief metropolitan magistrate in Delhi, Subhash Walson, Jindle was arrested by the Scotland Yard at Heathrow airport since his bag contained valuables which had been declared missing by Mrs Nagina Judge Waters, an

Indian settled in the UK who was also travelling on the same flight. The stolen articles recovered from Jindle included a pearl necklace worth Rs 24,000 and a wristwatch worth Rs 5,300. The Scotland Yard and Interpol who were in charge of the case arrested Jindle in London where he was charged with theft in the Oxbridge court on 10 January 1983. Jindle was released for want of evidence and the case transferred to the CBI which has now charged him under Section 379 (theft) and Section 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) of the IPC.

Jindle, a qualified criminologist from the USA who started the Globe Detective Agency (GDA) in 1961, now the largest private agency in Asia, protested against the "blatant frame-up" against him. "This is the price we have to pay for undertaking sensitive cases which are embarrassing to some people," said Jindle a few days after the CBI had charge-sheeted him. After the GDA had examined the charges, they had discovered that not only did this case have political implications, it also

revealed glaring instances of concessions which had been given by Air India and customs officials, both of whom he now threatens to take to court. Jindle pointed out that the co-passenger whose valuables he is alleged to have pilfered en route to London is the niece of former Member of Parliament, Charanjit Singh. "I am convinced that Charanjit Singh is the person behind these examining of charges against me. Why else will the CBI be given such a frivolous case especially since Interpol has not been able to prove anything against me? Once we come up with concrete evidence of the shady affair, we are going to initiate legal action against the CBI and Nagina Judge Waters for violating FLRA regulations."

Jindle was vehement in his defence. He explained that on the day when the incident occurred, there were only four passengers who were booked in the first class section on flight number AI 109 including Nagina Waters and himself. When the passengers were searched, following Nagina Waters' complaint, four more passengers who were travelling first class, without their names having been listed with Air India were found out. Secondly, he pointed out, under FLRA regulations, every Indian travelling by air is required to have his valuables registered with the customs. This was not done by Mrs. Waters despite the fact that she was carrying jewellery worth more than Rs 40,000. Thirdly, not only had the complaint not been filed a return with insurance companies for the articles, the loss was not reported to the police. "How have these illegal aspects gone unnoticed by the police both in London and India?" he demanded.

On the other hand, according to the CBI officials handling the case, the detective's arguments are highly specious and have no relevance to the bare facts of the case. "The valuables were stolen and found in the exclusive possession of Prem Kumar. There are witnesses to prove that the accused person immediately identified the stolen article as his. We are not taking any notice of the theories of frame-up and blackmail being expounded by the Globe Detective Agency," said one official. If the Globe Detective Agency had any investigating expertise worth recalling, they would not be exposing their poor stance in the case, he added.

The charges against Jindle, who is considered to be the leading private detective in India, caused ripples in Scotland Yard as Jindle, at that time, was investigating cases worth thousands of pounds on insurance



Prem Kumar Jindle, a victim?

frauds committed by Indians in the UK. On 29 October, Jindle was supposed to have taken to London Mrs. Davinder Kaur Sanga, wife of Joga Singh Sanga and Indian national set

tled in the UK. Sanga had defrauded the leading insurance companies in the UK by claiming that his wife was dead. She had been insured in the UK for £200,000 and this was the second insurance fraud case solved by the GDA in the UK. Even after his arrest by Scotland Yard, the insurance companies on whose behalf he was investigating the case arranged for his stay in London and in fact, approached GDA for handling more insurance frauds for them. "In all the cases there is an interesting pattern. Indians settled abroad have managed to produce forged death certificates of their wives, some of whom have been traced alive to Punjab and their illegal insurance claims proved by us. Making false insurance claims seems to have become a multi-million pound business. I feel even the insurance fraud which we were handling then has a connection with the false charges against me," said Jindle.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

UTTAR PRADESH

The Question of Eligibility

Protests over rejection of election nominations

Is a school teacher, or a professor, or a person convicted and sentenced for life but later released on bail by the High Court, or a liquor contractor who withdraws her partnership but whose partners do not surrender the licence, eligible to contest the Assembly or Parliamentary elections?

These questions have been raised in a number of election petitions filed after the 1984 general elections in Uttar Pradesh. Out of about 80 election petitions filed in the Allahabad High Court, a large number have been filed by teachers whose nominations were rejected because they held "an office of profit under the state government." The "office of profit" controversy began after a Supreme Court judgment last year which held that a teacher employed in a basic school run by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Basic Education holds "an office of profit under the state government" and is, therefore, disqualified from contesting elections under Article 191 (1) (a) of the Constitution.

"This judgment," says Keshari Nath Tripathi, an advocate in Allahabad, "is applicable only to the basic teachers. But the returning officers have applied it to the secondary and

degree teachers of the privately run colleges too. And no uniform criteria seem to have been adopted to accept or reject the nominations." In the Sakeet Assembly constituency in Etah district, Tripathi points out, the candidature of Ujjir Singh, principal of Janata inter college, was rejected while that of Virendra Pal Singh Solanki of the Janata Party, a chemistry teacher in Parvati Rashtriya Inter College, Siddhpur was accepted. The petition had been filed by another candidate, Suraj Singh Shakya of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Says petitioner Shakya, "if the rejection of the nomination of Ujjir Singh on the grounds that he held an office of profit under the state government is legal and proper, then, on the same ground, Solanki was also not qualified to contest the elections."

Several other candidates have also moved the courts. Ram Bodh Pandey, a geography teacher in Mahadeo Prasad Intermediate college, privately run by a registered society in Pratapgarh district, has challenged the rejection of his nomination for the Patti Assembly constituency which elected Prof. Vasudeo Singh, the present UP minister for food and civil supplies. The BJP candidates Ram Prakash Tripathi, former MP, and an

English teacher in Hiralal Vaish National Inter college, Chhibramau (Farrukhabad) has also appealed against the rejection of his nomination for the Kanauj Lok Sabha constituency in Farrukhabad district.

Sachindra Nath Tripathi of the Congress(I) has challenged the election of Doodnath of the Lok Dal from Mariyahun Assembly constituency in Jaunpur district. Sachindra's petition evokes the provisions of Section 8 of the Representation of Peoples Act 1951, under which "a person convicted by any court in India for any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years is disqualified from contesting the elec-

tions to the Legislative Assembly from the date of his conviction and continues to be disqualified for a further period of five years since his release."

Doodnath, says the petition, was convicted and sentenced for life under Section 302 IPC (murder) along with one year's rigorous imprisonment under Section 148 of the IPC (both sentences to run concurrently) by the Sessions Court on 9 February 1982. He was also convicted and sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 307 of the IPC (attempt to murder) plus two years' imprisonment under Section 148, IPC (both sent-

ences to run concurrently) by the same court on 22 October 1983. According to the petition, Doodnath then appealed to the Allahabad High Court against both judgments. He was given bail by the High Court on 12 May 1982 in the first case and on 24 October 1983 in the second. Since Doodnath was only bailed and the case against him has neither been stayed nor suspended and his appeals are still pending in the High Court, how could he be qualified to contest the elections?

The election of Vijaya Laxmi of Janata Party from Bansdih Assembly constituency in Ballia district has also been challenged. Vijaya was in partnership with three others, a licensee for a retail shop of country liquor under a contract with the state government for 1984-85. She applied for the withdrawal of her partnership last year and deposited the remaining amount for the full contract period (ending 31 March 1985) on 15 January 1985. Her partners, however, continued to vend liquor under the contract and the licence was never surrendered. A licensee, points out the petitioner, holds an office of profit under the government. And since the licence given to Vijaya Laxmi and her partners was never surrendered, she did not qualify to contest the election, either.

The election petition filed by defeated Congress(I) candidate Yogendra Singh also carries an interesting tale. According to him, Ram Bux Verma, a lecturer in the Nehru Degree College in Chhibramau town of Farrukhabad district, filed his nomination as a Lok Dal candidate from the Umarda Assembly constituency. Verma's wife, Kanti, filed her papers as a dummy candidate. But this was done in the name of Verma's first (deceased) wife, Ram Nandini, as Kanti's own name did not appear on the electoral rolls.

The nomination of Ram Bux Verma was rejected on the ground that he held "an office of profit under the government" while that of his wife was accepted. And Kanti Verma made it to the Assembly in the name of Ram Nandini Verma!

Another interesting election petition is one against Sanjay Singh who was elected from the Amethi Assembly constituency in Sultanpur district and is now a cabinet minister. Ram Baran of the Lok Dal has alleged that Sanjay Singh got the petitioner's signature forged to have one Surendra Pratap Bahadur Singh appointed his (Ram Baran's) election agent. And then through this fake agent Sanjay Singh fraudulently got the petitioner's nomination withdrawn.

Prashant Kumar, Lucknow

KERALA

A House United

Members of legislative bodies are seldom known to have taken time off for introspection, let alone discussing legislative procedure. But that is what members of the Kerala Legislative Assembly did recently when they sat around the tables for a three-day workshop on legislative procedures. About 120 of the 144 MLAs took part in the workshop—a rare assemblage of people's representatives not divided by the invisible barrier that separates the treasury benchers from the opposition.

The young speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, V.M. Sudheeran, told SUNDAY: "I thought it was high time that the procedural wrangles of legislative business were sorted out and the MLAs invited to sit together and suggest measures. I think it is the first time in the country that such a venture is taking place. The very fact that more than 100 MLAs attended the meeting shows how concerned they are about legislative procedures."

The workshop in which six papers were presented by MLAs themselves, recommended more than 100 steps to make the best use of Legislature time. The recommendations include:

- The duration of the Legislature should be increased to more than 100 days a year.
- Effective programme planning before the session starts.
- The government curb tendencies to rule by ordinances and that they be restricted to urgent matters that concern the life of a majority.
- Bills of an ordinance passed in the following session.

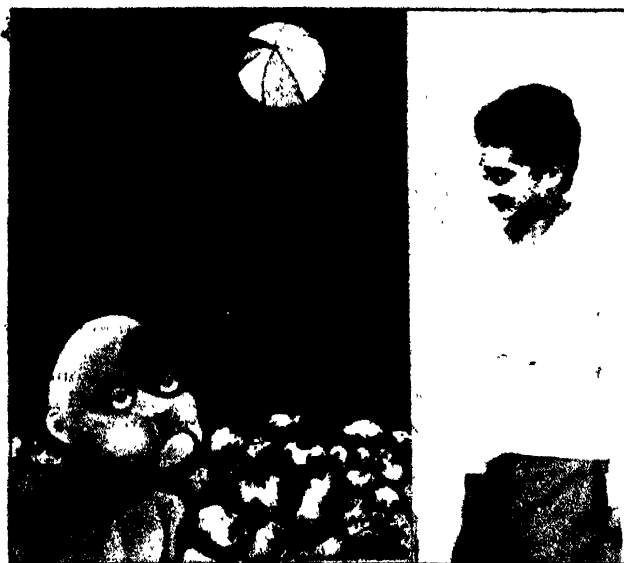
• Steps be taken to see that laws passed by the Assembly are effectively implemented. All relevant amendments be accepted irrespective of the members who propose the amendment.

Oomen Chandy, the chief whip of the Congress(I), in his paper on unofficial bills, said that the present practice of the ruling party MLAs is to blindly support the government and that of the opposition MLAs is to attack the government. It is only during the discussion of unofficial bills that MLAs get a chance to vent their thoughts. Unofficial bills, even if they are rejected, pave the way for useful discussions. The Lok Sabha has till date passed 14 unofficial bills while the Kerala Assembly has not yet passed an unofficial bill, Chandy pointed out. The government should take a more positive attitude towards private members' bills, Chandy said.

The government chief whip, Dr. K.C. Joseph (Kerala Congress) talked about organising the Legislature sessions. The CPI MLA K.C. Surendranth, in a paper on the privileges of legislators argued that if the government fails to keep promises made in the Legislature, that should also be brought under the purview of privileges of members. Another pertinent point which Surendranath made, was that many questions are not answered in the House and most often the answers are stereo-typed, like, "the matter is being enquired into."

Binoo John, Trivandrum

Reality Does Not Sell



The artist with his work: canvas of conscience

It was tragic realism at its best. Abhilash Bhattacharya's paintings, inspired by the death of thousands whose lives were silently snuffed out by the poisonous gas in Bhopal, are an evocative portrayal of their agony. The 24-year-old artist from Ujjain who recently held exhibitions at Ujjain, Bhopal and New Delhi, says that his paintings were the "fulfilment of an urge that erupted like a volcano." Bhattacharya has not only attempted to

recreate the scene of that fateful night with paint and brush, but for the touch of realism he has stuck onto his 13 canvases scraps of objects, bits of cloth, and broken spectacles. Every painting is accompanied by a couplet written by the artist himself. But for all his ingenuity, there are no takers for his paintings. As Bhattacharya says, "Nobody wants to take such tragic reality into their drawing rooms. Everybody wants only a world of beauty."

Songs for All

His *bhajans* have charmed his devotees; his *ghazals* are no less popular. Thirty-two



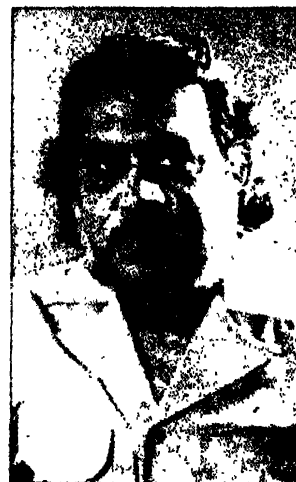
Jalota: on to films

year old Anup Jalota now rides the crest of success. Two of his discs—*Bhajan Sandhya* and *Bhajan Yatra*—have crossed the double platinum mark. Language is no problem for him—his *Mono Jopo Naam* in Bengali is heading towards a platinum jubilee.

Takkhayul, his latest disc—a double-ghazal album—has received advance orders of more than 75,000. Jalota now carries his talents to the silver screen: besides lending his voice, he will also be playing the lead roles in Hindi films. Several of them—*Chintamani Surdas*, *Pyar ka Sawan*, *Awara Masiha* are already on the floors.

Camera-happy

The venue was Tokyo and the event, a photo-contest held by the Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO. The judges had a tough decision staring them in the face—4,231 entries from 21 member states of the UN-sponsored organisation in the Asian and Pacific regions were to be shortlisted to the best 110. For India's photographer Sunil Dutt it was a memorable moment when the verdict was announced: he was to be the proud recipient of the Ito Ryoji Memorial Prize for his entry on the theme 'Happiness.' Dutt, who has acquired many international awards for photo-



Dutt: one more award

graphy, remembers his happiest moments while working on Calcutta's spastic children.

The Classic Musician



Roy Chowdhury: playing on

The Sixties was the time when the Beatlesmania had gripped teenagers all over the world, when any competitor just lapsed into anonymity. Subroto Roy Chowdhury, an exponent of Indian classical music, was one of the few to survive their onslaught. Ever since he visited Europe on a tour as a student, Roy Chowdhury has been performing at various concerts and acquainting the West with the intricacies of Indian music. This summer he performed at a record 40 concerts in seven weeks spanning Austria, Switzer-

land, France, West Germany and Denmark. All his fame in the West has however, not dimmed his concern for the cause of humanity: he donated the entire royalty of one of his discs *Calcutta Meditation*, to Amnesty International. He has also raised one lakh rupees for the Tamil refugees of Sri Lanka. In between his concerts and his social work, Roy Chowdhury will now have to squeeze in a third occupation: teaching. The versatile musician has been appointed "visiting" professor of Indian classical music in Bonn.

These days Suresh Oberoi loses no opportunity to pick a bone with his co stars. He has not spared thespians like Dilip Kumar either. At a recent party he was overheard telling a visibly shocked guest, "You know Dilip Kumar got a rare complex after doing the first scene with me. He started studying my movements very carefully. I think my work must have given him some kind of problem." Every one thought he was "either sick or drunk," for the next day Oberoi couldn't believe that he had made such a remark.



Smita Patil: sick of art films

Smita Patil is another star who appears to be sick of art films. She is awaiting the release of her films, *Mera Ghar Mere Bachche* and *Akhir Kyon?* If they succeed, it could boost her career. Smita feels that it is films like these which serve a much better cause "than any of those pseudo intellectual stuff."

It appears that directors are getting fed up with Amrita Singh. Reason her tantrums are going beyond limits. Said one disgusted producer, "It is high time she learnt how to behave



Farha: acting high and mighty



Amrita Singh: tantrums

It will be too late otherwise. This industry has not forgiven the biggest of stars once they have fallen." Is Ms Singh listening?

What's wrong with *I arha* these days? Has the little success that she has had gone to her head? Farha, who makes her debut in Yash Chopra's *Paasle*, is behaving "high and mighty." She is also asking for bigger roles than some of the top heroines. "It's not done. She should realise what she is doing before it is too late," one of her rivals complained. Farha calls all the charges against her as "baseless and malicious."

Amitabh Bachchan is a man of word. He is soon to fulfil the promise he had made to a friend, director Tinnu Anand, during the making of the hit film, *Kaalia*. Next, *Shahanshah*, a big budget film, was planned. Amitabh was all set to start work when he met with the accident during the shooting of *Coolie* and *Shahanshah* was in troubled waters. Matters became worse when he entered politics and announced his intention to quit films. People asked Tinnu to give up but he decided to wait for his friend to return to the sets. His patience finally paid off. Amitabh has remembered his promise and is ready to shoot now. However, he requested Tinnu to make some minor changes in the script to suit his new MP image.

Sweet faced Rehman is now safely ensconced in the number two slot in Malayalam films. He is improving with every film. His latest hit, *Kuudum Thedi*, opposite Nadia Moidu, is running to packed houses. He is taking the utmost advantage of the fact that he is the youngest and the best looking among the top stars today.

Television was not taken seriously by the big wigs of the film industry until the success of the first serial showed them the way to an alternative medium. Now, there is a spate of established names who are making serials for TV. Yash Chopra, Shivam Benegal, Saeed Mirza, Kundan Kohli are all currently involved with one project or the other. Shakti Samanta too is working on *Ardhanagiri* while J C Mehra is another big name in the medium trying to make a name for himself. Gulzar is writing the script for *Va De Vi*, *Immortal Wala* which will have Rishi Malhotra in the lead and Savitri Ray's project which is to be directed by his son Sandip and Victor Banerjee. Om Puri and Dr. Sreeram Lagoo are now well known. Jaijit Kapur is also gaining approval for his serial *Life in a five star hotel* and Mihir Shah is completing his serial for TV. There are also many more names to come with serials becoming a film industry mainstay.

The Small Screen

It is not long before *Ados Pados* too will be removed from prime time viewing. Meanwhile, its director Sai Paranjpye, is already busy with another serial *Dadagiri*. Sai's daughter Ashwini and another actor Apti Pal (who has already been seen by TV viewers in *Idhar Udhar*) play neighbours who fall in love, provoking the wrath of their parents. Like most of Sai's ventures, this too is a comedy and the hilarious antics of the couple's grandparents, when they try to intervene on behalf of the youngsters, are sure to keep television audiences enraptured.

Though *Barrister Vinod* and *Karamchand* are both sleuths whose job is to solve mystery murder



A still from a forthcoming serial, *Karamchand*

plots for television viewers, there could be no two personalities more different from each other. While *Barrister Vinod*, portrayed by Parikshat Sahani, is a suave, debonair detective, who has a streak of James Bond in him, *Karamchand* is just the opposite: sloppy, shabbily dressed, forgetful, and one who will not even command a second glance. Pankaj Kapoor who is playing the role of this refreshingly human character, is a veteran stage actor and has also acted in a couple of films including Mrinal Sen's *Khandahar* and Kundan Shah's *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro*.

Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi's phenomenal success has led many an enterprising filmmaker to cash in on the trend-setting serial. When Shafi Inamdar walked out of the programme, an advertisement filmmaker got Shafi to do a double role for a commercial spot on vests. And to make the most of it, it was even slotted for viewing just before the serial. A couple of filmmakers have signed on Shafi and Swaroop Sampat to play husband and wife in their

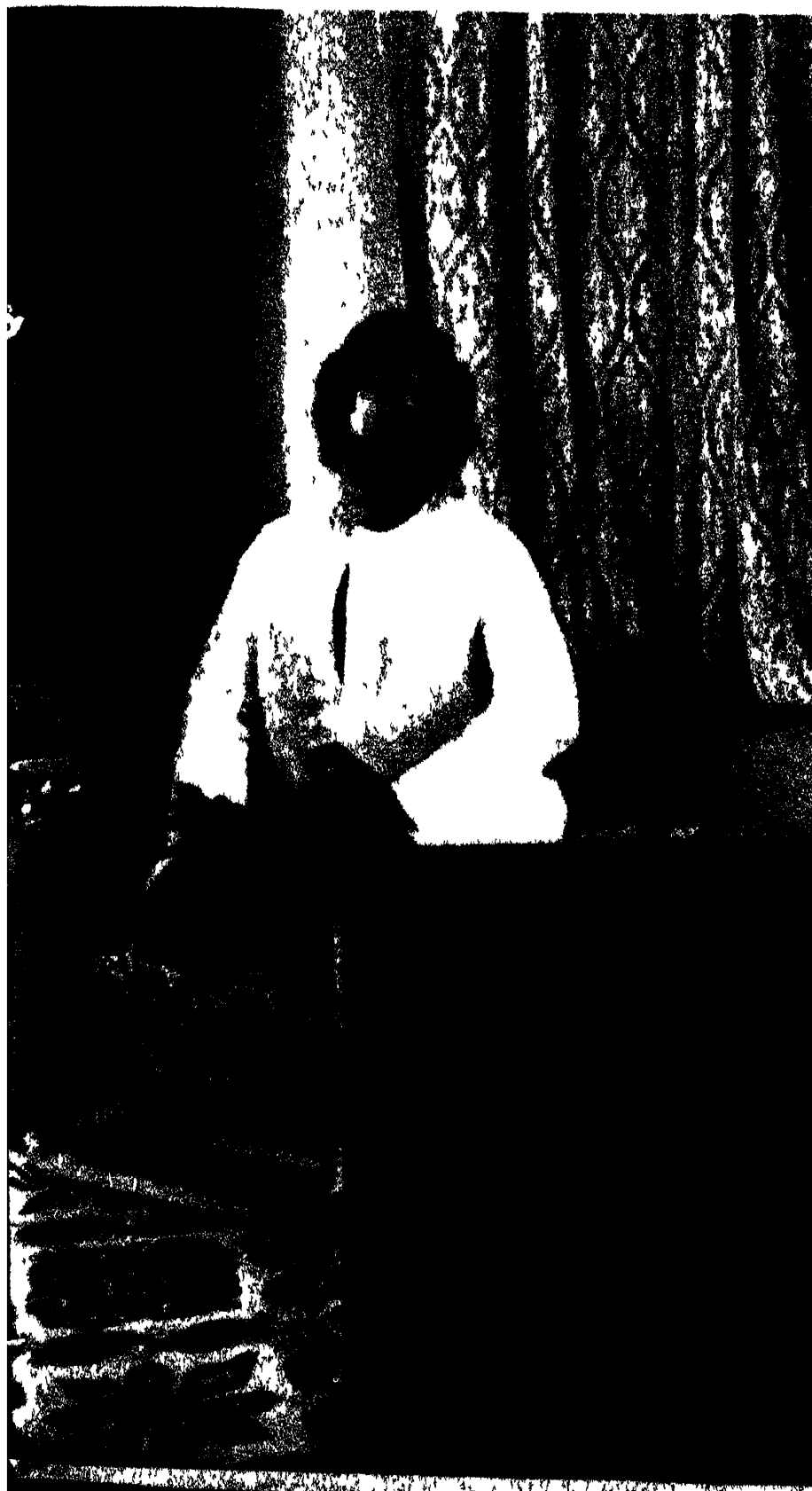
films. Another producer has gone a step further and cast Shafi Swaroop and Rakesh Badi in their TV serial roles.

With more and more filmstars hopping on to the TV serial bandwagon, they have brought along with them the one problem that plagued the film industry and was a bane for the directors: that of securing shooting dates. The makers of *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* and *Idhar Udhar* were the first to get a taste of the actors' predilection when Shafi Inamdar and Ravi Baswani opted out of the serials, due to their film commitments. Now, another director, Amit Khanna, finds himself without a female lead for his serial, *Chhaapte Chhaapte*. The plot, which deals with the rivalries between two newspaper organisations, has been in the pipeline for a long time. The pilot project, which was okayed by Doordarshan, was shot with Kanwaljeet and Sarika, as at that time their film careers had virtually come to a standstill. But Amit soon found out that Sareeka had signed on a film and could no longer be available.



Kumar Gaurav and Shernaz Patel in *Janam*

Guess who's playing tabla for Ravi Shanker.

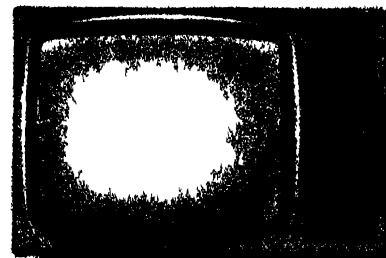


He thought he'd be watching a TV programme on Ravi Shanker. But suddenly, it was as though Ravi Shanker had sat down in his very living room and started to play. And the experience was so phenomenal, he just had to join in, on the tabla.

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KOHINOR

And no
two moments
will ever
be the same

Nature's Seismologists

Soviet scientists are setting up their first biosismological centre to predict earthquakes. This centre will be a part of the Institute of Seismology at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. Prof. Pavel Marikovsky said scientists here will study mountain burrow animals, birds, ants and marmots to monitor their reactions to electromagnetic waves, electric fields, gas smells and other factors associated with earthquakes. At the same time the researchers hope to discover which organs specific animals use to identify geophysical forces. Prof. Marikovsky feels that animals make good earthquake "watchdogs" because they hear and feel the sounds preceding earth tremors, which human beings can detect only with the help of sophisticated equipment. Meanwhile, at the Soviet Institute of High Pressure Physics, scientists are creating "mini-quakes" by using a press developing a force up to 50,000 tons in order to evolve better earthquake prediction techniques.



The Search for a Vaccine

According to a report published in the British journal *Nature*, scientists have successfully grown all of the genes of the leprosy bacteria in the laboratory, preparing the way for a fresh assault against the disease. The research, which is being done by scientists of the Whitehead Institute of Biomedical Research and its affiliate Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, should lead to a screening test for early diagnosis and treatment of leprosy. It can also provide a test for evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment of patients who already have the disease.

The Brain: Growing Constantly

The myth that the brain stops developing when old age sets in has been exploded by a professor of physiology and anatomy, Prof. Marian Diamond of the University of California, Berkeley, USA. The brain continues to develop and grow if it is stimulated by intellectual activity in the form of, say travel or puzzles, he says. Prof. Diamond maintains that the cerebral cortex, the layer of nerve cells on the surface of the brain, responds positively in an intellectual environment and begins to make new connections with other cells. In a study, Prof. Diamond has outlined how rats, which were 767 days old (the human equivalent of 75 years), were stimulated with toys, mazes, ladders and wheels. These rats lived until they were 904 days old and their cortex had thickened, a sign that the brain cells had increased in dimension.



Lead: A Status Symbol

Insight into the lives of black and white colonial Americans has come from an unusual source: the lead in skeletons. According to a team of researchers based at the University of Minnesota, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. and the Research Centre for Archaeology, Virginia, the lead content in bones excavated from burial grounds reflects on the social and occupational status of the individuals. Today, lead enters our bodies from motor exhausts or drinking water that has come into contact with old lead pipes. The average lead burden is 36 micrograms in an individual. But, according to Dr. Aufderheide, this figure was often exceeded among the people of colonial America. This was because of exposure to lead-glazed ceramic and pewter containers used for storage, preparation and serving of food and beverages. But only the affluent could have access to these.

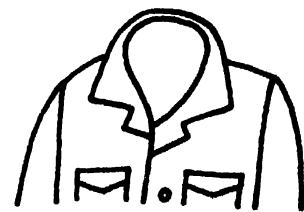


Curse or Allergy?

Soon after the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen was discovered near Luxor, Egypt in November 1922, two dozen explorers who had entered it died. Dr. Caroline Stenger-Phillips argues that organic substances including fruits and vegetables, left in the tomb by the ancient Egyptians, decayed over the centuries, created moulds and later organic dust in air-tight chambers. She states that the deaths were caused by allergic alveolitis, an allergic reaction to the mould and inflammation of air chambers in the lungs, causing pulmonary insufficiency.

Comfortable Coats

Scientists have for long been working on a waterproof coating for garments which, besides keeping out raindrops will also allow water vapour from the body to get out. And finally, researchers at the Shirley Institute in Manchester, England have come up with what may be the ultimate in "breathe-through" waterproof clothing. The pores of this new fabric are much smaller than the pores in the conventional waterproofs. Normally, air, oxygen, nitrogen, water and carbon dioxide pass through the pores of the waterproof fabric at a very slow rate. Now, the researchers have found a way of speeding the passage of these vapours: they have attached special chemical groupings to the fabric which drive on the water molecules. The difference in humidity between the damp sweaty air inside the garment and drier air outside also transmits water vapour more rapidly than conventional micropores.





FAVOURITE SMALL INVESTMENT LIMITED

From rags to riches

The saving money begets money has never been held in doubt by anybody anywhere in the world. There is however someone who stands out as a glaring exception for the financial empire at his command today was built on his unflinching faith in man and in God and not on money.

At an age when most young men were dreaming of a prosperous life, N. Dey was engaged in a bitter struggle for survival. From peddling fountain pens to hawking vests and briefs on the footpaths of Calcutta to taking up private tuitions, he tried his hand at anything and everything. With time, his fortunes started looking up. The period 1947-49 saw him assisting the legendary P. C. Barooah in making films. But his long-

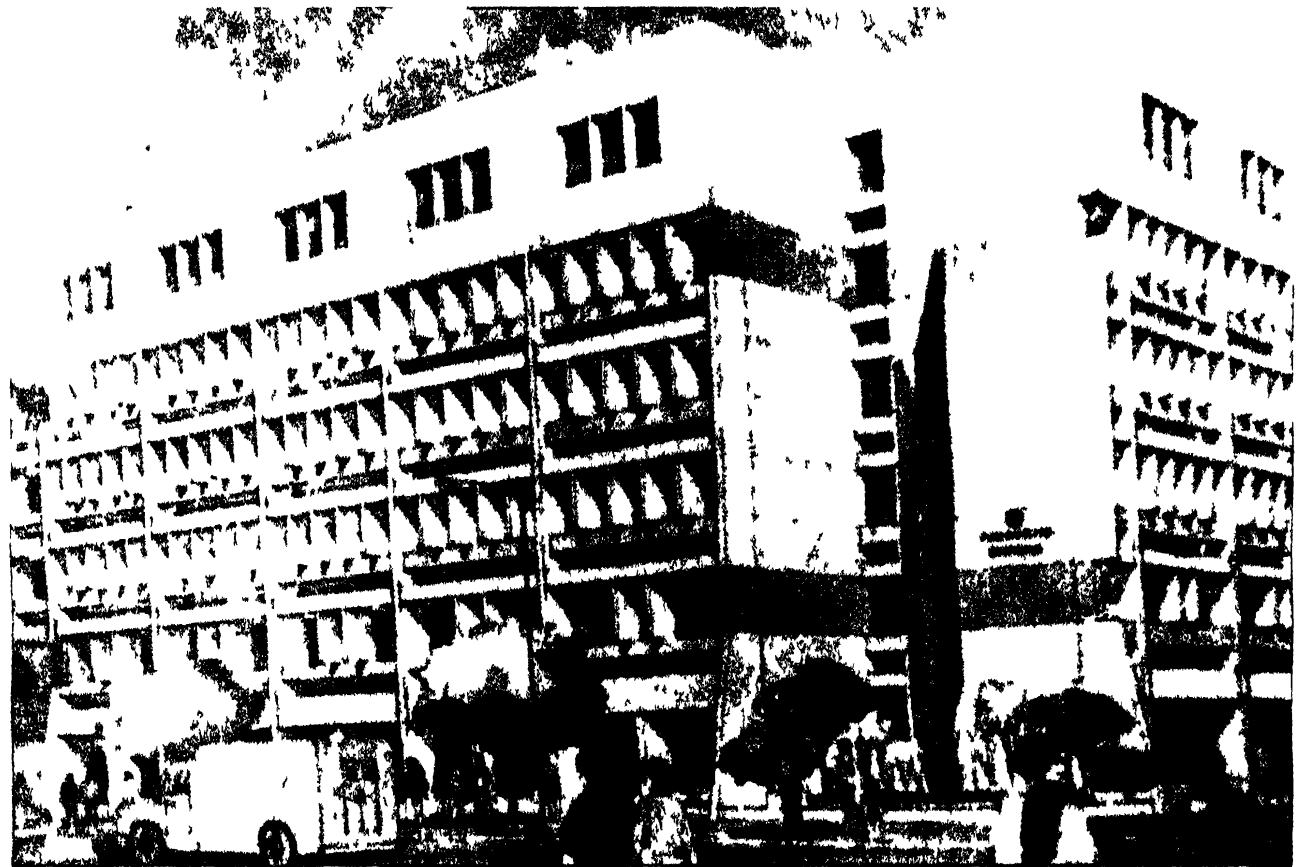


Mr N. Dey, Founder and Managing Director

cherished dream of making it big as a film technician crashed when the films flopped at the box office. N. Dey was back to square one. This however failed to dampen his

spirits. The born entrepreneur that he was, he soon brought out a magazine, *Rekha O-Bani*. His venture met with limited success. All this time he had been smart-

Proposed New Building 'FAVOURITE BHAWAN' 83, Park Street, Calcutta



BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH, 1984

Previous year	LIABILITIES	Current year	Previous year	ASSETS	Current year
Rs		Rs P	Rs		Rs P
1 52 326	SHARE CAPITAL	1, 52, 326 27	77,80,118	FIXED ASSETS	95,70,578 25
15 72,765	RESERVES AND SURPLUS	17,88,490 05	3,49,47,692	INVESTMENTS	4,96,93,219 06
6 01 95 092	CURRENT LIABILITIES AND PROVISIONS	8,26,52,994 46	1,91,92,373	CURRENT ASSETS LOANS AND ADVANCES	2,53 30,013 47
<u>6 19 20 183</u>		<u>8,45,93 810 78</u>	<u>6,19,20 183</u>		<u>8 45 93,810 78</u>

ing to do something more positive and on a much larger scale. Previous experience had shown him the necessity of saving for the rainy season and N. Dey thought that this would be the best way to be of some use to his countrymen. Came 1971 and along with a few relatives and friends, he took the plunge. Favourite Small Investment was born. The journey at the beginning was not smooth, in fact there were problems—one following another. Yet nothing could deter these men whose ceaseless endeavour have yielded fruit today. The success of the company can be gauged from the fact that from a paltry 200 certificate holders in 1973, the number has risen to a mind-boggling 40,000,00 in just 14 years. With a network of 263 branches throughout the country the company today has a working force of 7 000,00 out of which 4,00 000 are fully dependent on Favourite for their livelihood.

Maturity payment towards certificate holders.

1982-83 : 1,11,90,708

1983-84 : 1,93,74,255

1984-85 : 2,30,00,000

(approx.)

dent on Favourite for their livelihood.

Where does the success of Favourite lie? As Mr N. Dey, now the Managing Director puts it, "In addition to the many schemes or policies that we have introduced,

we offer door-to-door service to our clients. We visit the remotest village where even today the Life Insurance Corporation or banks are unheard of. Moreover we have been able to convince the people of our bonafides. Ours is an open

business. Despite many financial institutions that had sprung up overnight and vanished suddenly, people's faith on us has remained intact. How was the investor's money secure? "The safety of the money is beyond all doubt for the simple reason that under the existing laws we cannot invest anywhere but in banks only." Was he sure his company would never be on the run? "Our assets itself can take care of all our deposits," said Mr Dey with a fair account of pride in his voice. It is here that he became somewhat overcome with emotion. He recollected the days when debtors were after him, when he was unable to pay his staff, when the daily collection was a meagre Rs 45/- Today he rightly boasts of paying his staff better than most of his competitors. His logic is simple, "If you underpay your men they tend to become dishonest." Mr Dey had a surprise for us when he said that he was in favour of Government control and would welcome nationalisation. He was quick to add that this should not be interpreted as a weakness since 60% of his customers have reinvested their money. The client list is on the increase because of so many schemes introduced by the company—schemes aimed at the middle class and the poor. It is because of this that loans are given at simple interest while the money invested in banks is deposited as fixed deposit which would earn interest at compound rate. Of all the schemes, the Group Insurance Scheme for 5 to 10 years has been the most popular and so has been the Janata policy. The biggest facility offered by Favourite however is that no policy lapses totally even if there is a break in paying the premiums.

There are yet certain unique features about Favourite. Despite being the founder of the company, Mr Dey has no relatives—something very unusual in these days of favouritism and nepotism. Moreover all the directors have been elevated to their present positions from field officers. Mr Dey thinks this creates a feeling of attachment

Favourite at a glance

1 Established	9th February 1971.
2 Founder and Managing Director	Mr N. Dey
3 Deposit with banks (as on 31st March 1984)	Rs 4,96,40,868.03
4 Number of Branches	263
5 Number of field force	7,000,00 (Approx)
6 Number of Certificates sold	40,000,00 (Approx)
7 Number of Offices Owned	12
8 Number of Staff	3834

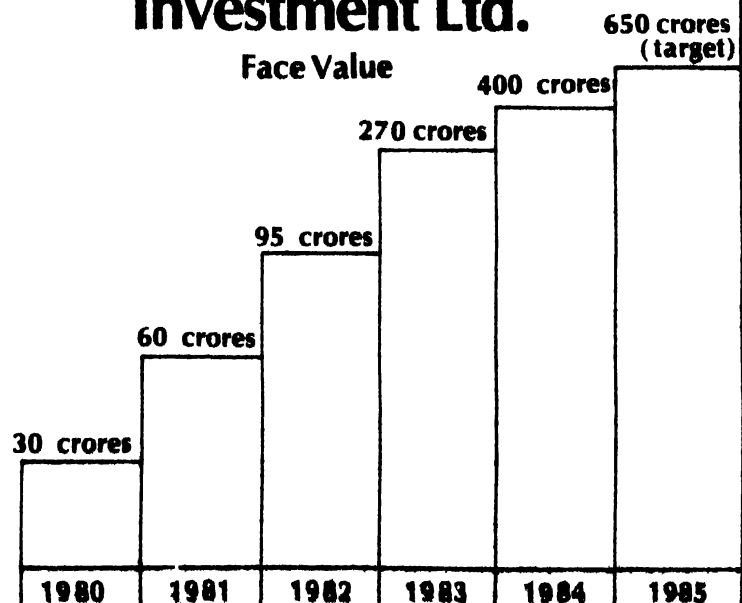
both with the company as well as with the colleagues. We told him that he never donates even for a noble cause. "Why should I," Mr Dey put a counter question. "The money isn't mine and so I have no right to squander it."

Favourite also holds the unique record in that way back in 1975 it was the first Indian financial company whose Managing Director's

fee and other allowances were approved by the Under Secretary to the President.

The greatest achievement of Favourite lies in its opening up of new vistas of rural economy. Not only have the rural poor benefitted immensely but they have also become conscious to a noble cause—one of participating in the economic development of the country.

Growth of Favourite Small Investment Ltd.





FAVOURITE SMALL INVESTMENT LIMITED

Significance of Saving The 'Favourite' Way

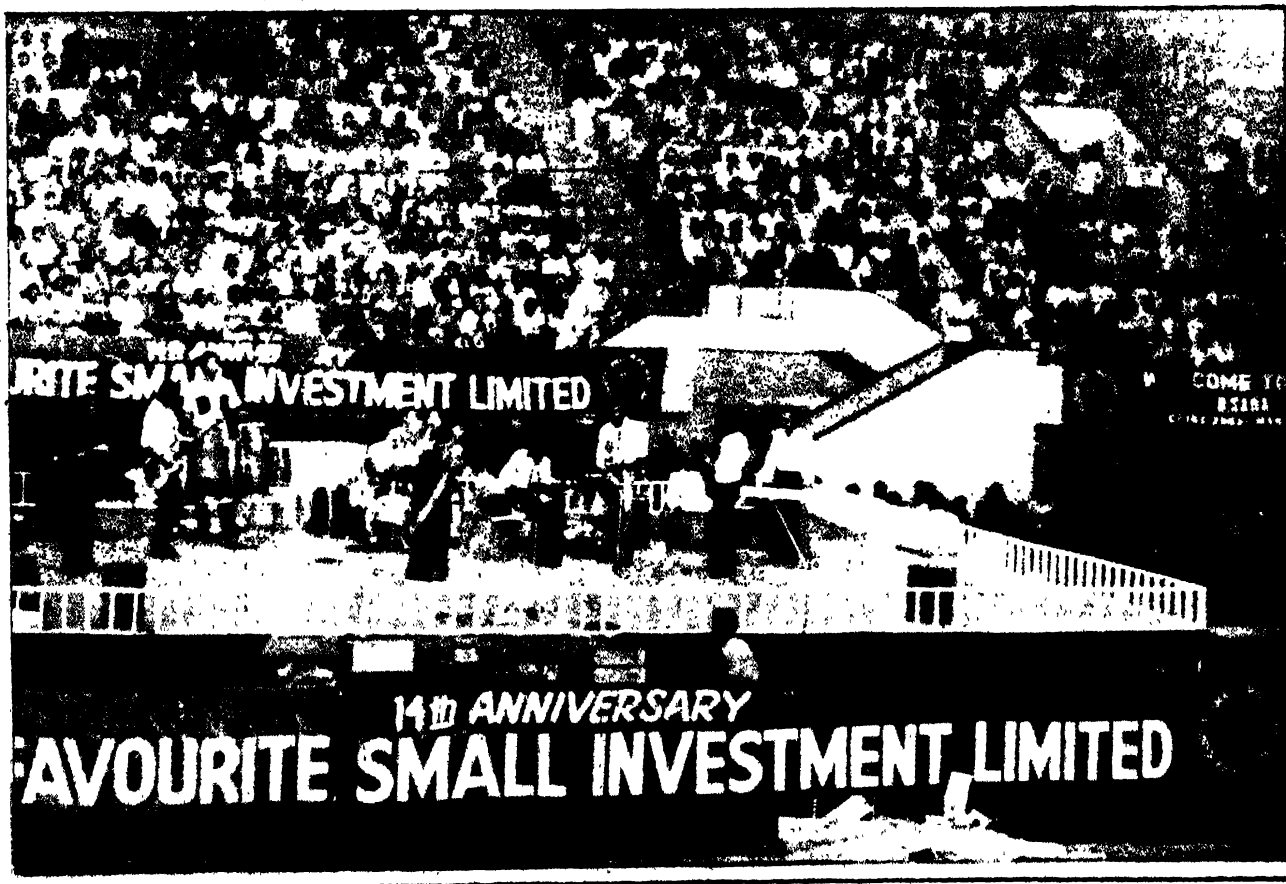
One of the great hindrance in the economy of any developing country is the slow rate of capital accumulation. Therefore the importance of small savings is great and far-reaching.

Savings and investment is the key to national progress. In private or family life savings brings happiness as also comfort and guarantees against uncertain days of the future. Even ants feel the necessity of savings—so that the want of someday may not paralyse them. All seasons are not sunny in a man's life and he has to face winter inevitably. As such one must have savings for the future or else he must face the



Mr Oris Lindo, Minister of Agriculture, Meghalaya, Mr N. Dey and Mr R. Khaitan MLA W.B. (Left to Right) at the 14th anniversary celebration at Netaji Indoor Stadium

Mr N. Dey



consequences.

The small savings drive since its very inception has been executed in a large measure through the post office saving banks. However of late there has been a spurt in non-banking saving organisations. From the economic point of view all such organisations help the Government. More, such companies solve a part of the unemployment problem. Taking all aspects into consideration these companies therefore are doing their best in the interest of the people and the Government. Foremost among such companies is Favourite Small Investment Ltd. Through the persistent effort of its field officers and workers the company have made the people conscious regarding small savings by oper-

Special Benefit to Certificate Holders

- 1) Janata Personal Benefit Accident Insurance.

The erstwhile arrangement for giving benefit to the Certificate holders of Free Insurance against death caused by accident with G.I.C. (A Government of India undertaking) has been extended to 5 years in certain cases and the quantum of such benefit now available is Rs 15000/- for individual Certificate holders.

- 2) Group Personal Accident Insurance

The erstwhile arrangement for extending the benefit of Free Insurance against death caused by accident with G I C is now available in certain cases till maturity .

- 3) Gramin Accident Insurance

The erstwhile arrangement for extending the benefit with G.I.C. to the Certificate holders has been introduced.

Under this scheme a benefit of Rs 6,000 will be paid to the individual certificate holder on death caused by accident.



Mr. N. Dey with Mr. Khurshed Alam Khan, Minister of State for External Affairs

ating in the remote corners of the country where the Life Insurance Corporation or banks are not heard of even today. The achievements and performance of the company in the field of mobilisation of small savings for productive investments have gone a long way towards socio-economic amelioration of India. It has inculcated the habit of thrift on a mass scale and is rendering yeoman's service to the country by adding value to something which, indirectly speaking, may be of insignificant value. But collected together and properly directed these small dribbles of individual savings have come to constitute a major catalytic agent in setting the pace and pattern of our development and diversification in different spheres to pull

out the economy from the present level of poverty and underdevelopment. It is rightly said that small drops of water make a mighty ocean. Similarly small doses of private saving add up to a sizeable amount to meet financial needs of capital of a country like ours where capital is both short as well as shy

In a developing economy like ours which is riding on the winged horse of inflation, small borrowings are certainly useful in some measure to combat the growing inflationary pressure. Favourite Small Investment Ltd deserves full throated appreciation for discovering talents of our young men and women in a highly challenging, useful and rewarding job.

TODAY'S SAVINGS TOMORROW'S BENEFIT SO WE HAVE TAKEN SHELTER OF FAVOURITE



Get a certificate from Favourite.
It Guarantees you a worry-free future.
Be a member of the Favourite Team itself.



FAVOURITE
Small Investment Ltd.

Head Office & Registered Office 83, Park Street, Calcutta 700016.
Phone 24-6653 / 29-3488.

Founder and Managing Director-N. Dey

BEGINNING 25 AUGUST 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a favourable period for marriage negotiations. An unexpected journey lies in store for you. Peace will reign at home. Speculative ventures will yield good results, some of you may receive money or property through unexpected sources. Professionals are likely to get a promotion. Businessmen will make steady progress. Keep a sharp eye on your health.
Good dates: 25, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is a favourable period for students. Your domestic problems will be solved this week. A letter from a long lost friend will bring good tidings. Your health will improve markedly. Sportsmen will come out with flying colours in competitions. Be prepared for setbacks on the financial front; you may have to borrow money to tide over this period.
Good dates: 26, 28 and 29
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) For those of you who are unemployed there are bright chances that you will find a job this week. Professionals will get better opportunities. Your financial prospects are not too bad. However, businessmen will face a difficult time. At home, you will be called upon to shoulder additional responsibilities. You may fall ill this week.
Good dates: 27, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) The week is extremely lucky for those in service. A promotion or a posting to a place of your choice is in the offing. Businessmen will also bag lucrative deals. The domestic front will remain peaceful and your financial prospects will look up. Students are advised to make full use of the opportunities that come their way. Do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 28, 30 and 31
Lucky numbers: 5, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is a bright period for all concerned. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. Friends and relatives will keep you occupied this week. Politicians and lawyers will also find this period favourable. On the financial front, some of you will gain money or property through inheritance. Those above 50 should keep a vigilant eye on their health.
Good dates: 26, 28 and 30
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North-east



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) A lucky period for creative artists and writers. Businessmen should not hesitate to undertake risky deals. Professionals will also make steady headway. A promotion cannot be ruled out. Love and marriage are well signified. On the financial front, gains from an unexpected source are in store for you. A pleasure trip is in the offing.
Good dates: 25, 27 and 29
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is the ideal time to solve legal problems. Friends will prove very helpful. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. Artists and sportsmen are likely to achieve recognition. Businessmen will find this phase favourable, but they should avoid risky financial deals. Professionals, especially those in government service, will prosper.
Good dates: 29, 30 and 31
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Lovers are advised to postpone their plans for the time being. Your financial prospects are not very bright. Domestic problems will worry you throughout the week, but do not lose patience. However, you will make steady progress on the professional front. Businessmen will also find the period favourable.
Good dates: 26, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Financially, this is a good period; you can make fresh investments. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. However, this is not a favourable week for lovers. Try and avoid unnecessary arguments. Your health too will bother you throughout this phase. The domestic front will remain peaceful.
Good dates: 25, 29 and 31
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) The stars foretell a bleak period. Guard against deception. One of your close friends will be working to embarrass you. Lovers are advised to postpone matrimonial plans. The economic front is equally disheartening; you may find yourself steeped in debts. Take care of your diet as your health will steadily deteriorate.
Good dates: 26, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) A lucky week for students and those unemployed. While students may get a chance to study in prestigious institutions, jobs are in the offing for those unemployed. Friends and relatives will be of great help. The domestic front will remain peaceful. Women may receive expensive gifts such as clothing and jewellery.
Good dates: 25, 26 and 30
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 9
Favourable direction: West



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Lovers will find this phase extremely favourable. Singers and performing artistes will win rare honours. Those in service have bright chances of going abroad. Businessmen can go ahead with expansion plans. If you have legal problems pertaining to property, this is the right time to pursue them. At home, your children will be a source of joy.
Good dates: 28, 29 and 31
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: South-east

For those born between 15 August and 14 September:

You like to maintain cordial relations with everybody without getting deeply involved emotionally. You are often misunderstood because of your self-centredness. However, many people admire you from a distance. You have a high opinion of yourself. Those born during this period should maintain self-respect without becoming arrogant. Basically you are full of healthy optimism and possess a warm, sympathetic heart. You have a flair for adventure and love to travel. Women born under this sign make great social workers.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



GIRIDIH A prisoner tied to a tree, or the leg of a table or cot, with a police constable standing on guard is a common sight at the Ahilpur police station which has not had a lock up for many years. The police barrack is in a school room while the police station is housed in a revenue department building. Constables have to walk for 15 km before boarding a bus to bring the accused to the police station—*The Times of India* (S M Mehta, New Delhi)

MADRAS A brave fourth standard boy, who was kidnapped from his school in Adyar recently, gave the slip to the gang members when they parked their car near a tea stall in Besantnagar. The police said that the boy was whisked away when he was going to the toilet in his school in Gandhinagar around 1.30 pm. It was about 7 pm when the car stopped near a tea stall. The boy quietly slipped out and ran all the way to Adyar. He was sighted by the school watchman who arranged to send him home—*The Hindu* (V A Sriramloo Madras)

SHIMOGA The municipal authorities seized a large quantity of adulterated butter following complaints from consumers. Some people from nearby villages were selling butter in Gandhi Bazar when the municipal health officer, acting on the complaints he had received, rushed to the bazar along with his staff. He took 20 sellers into custody but they were later let off after they had taken a pledge in front of Basava's statue not to indulge in adulteration in future. The entire

quantity of adulterated butter was poured on the statue—*Deccan Evening Herald* (P Mohanraj, Bangalore)

TRIVANDRUM February has only 29 days even in a leap year. But for the imaginative few who fabricate muster rolls of labourers employed by the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), February has 31 days. The auditor general of India found that in the muster rolls of NREP, Kerala, labourers were shown as engaged for execution of work on "unreal dates" such as 31 September 1981 and 29, 30 and 31 February 1982—*Indian Express* (M Udayakumar, Trivandrum)

MANDYA Part of a public road at Kikkeri village in Mandya district has been sold off without the knowledge of the higher authorities. The sale was effected by none other than the village panchayat which converted part of the road as a site, off the Mysore Hassan highway. The sale deed file was later forwarded to the Mandya deputy commissioner for approval. According to maps on the area, the land sold has been used as a road since 1882. The road links Gangenahalli and Kikkeri. The farmers of Gangenahalli who were using the road are now facing difficulties in reaching their lands and villages—*Indian Express* (M R Jayaprakash, Bangalore)

BANGALORE Bangalore is part of Tamil Nadu in the Vatican records. Kannada Catholic Association vice president J R Pereira told newsmen that some "fanatic priests" had managed to record Bangalore as part of Tamil Nadu by giving a Tamil name to the city's Aarogya Maate Maha Devalaya (a church). Vatican priests who did not know much about Indian geography had believed the version of the Tamil priests. He said his association had written to the Pope about the factual error—*Indian Express* (R Agrawal, Bangalore)

NEW DELHI Ever heard of a dead person giving radio commentary? The All India Radio has at least one such sports commentator in their panel for this year. In reply to a question by Mr Piyu Ranjan Das Munshi in the Lok Sabha recently, the minister of state for information and broadcasting, Mr V N Gadgil, while giving the names of radio commentators, included the name of T N Lau in the panel for the current year. Lau died in March last year. According to Mr Gadgil, Lau is approved by AIR for commenting on hockey, football and badminton—*Indian Express* (A narjeet Singh Bhatia, Dehradun)

WITHOUT COMMENT

(It is) a victory for the people of Assam—L K Advani, BJP general secretary, on the Assam accord

A happy augury for the unity and solidarity of the nation—Dr Farooq Abdullah

One more feather in the Prime Minister's cap—N T Rama Rao



The whole thing (Assam agreement) is absurd—Jyoti Basu

It is a very happy news—Ramakrishna Hegde, Karnataka CM

A welcome development—Sharad Pawar, Congress(S) president

The finest Independence Day gift—A K Antony, Congress(I) general secretary, in *Indian Express*

The pragmatic approach by both the Prime Minister and the Assam movement leadership has contributed in arriving at a solution in a spirit of give and take—Editorial in *The Assam Tribune*

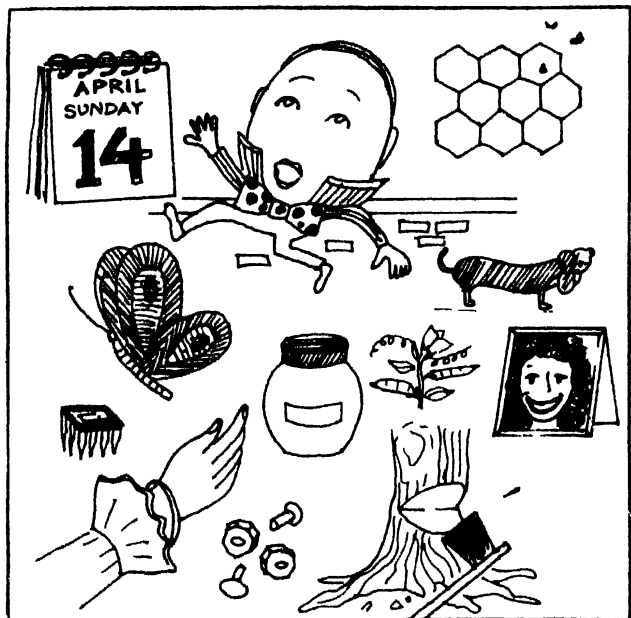
It seems strange that the government should be so keen on collecting voters from those areas where it has seldom succeeded in collecting revenue—Editorial in *The Sentinel*, voicing concern about the possibility of alien voters finding their way into the electoral rolls

The Prime Minister has been as good as his word—Editorial in *The Telegraph*, on the signing of the Assam accord

Again, as in Punjab, this is everybody's victory and nobody's loss—Editorial in *Indian Express*

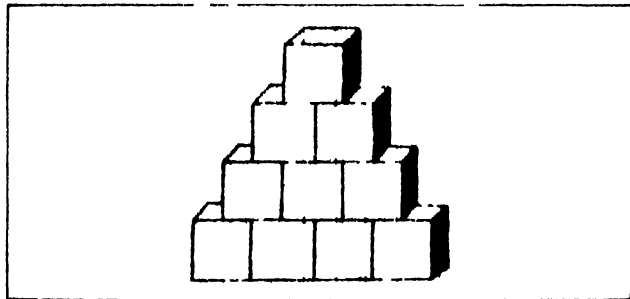
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

What's in a Word?



Do these pictures make your mouth water? Look again, and they may. What item of food does each object remind you of?

Blockbuster



A, E, E, G, I, K, P, R, S, S

Fill in the letters given above into the squares of the blank pyramid so that these form eight four letter words reading downwards

Mind Bender

Here is a real brain twister. Match name of a part of the body from column I to a word from column II to make a familiar compound word or phrase. For example, HIP and FLASK combine to give you HIP FLASK. You may find some words from Column II fitting in with words from Column I, but use the more common of the two combinations.

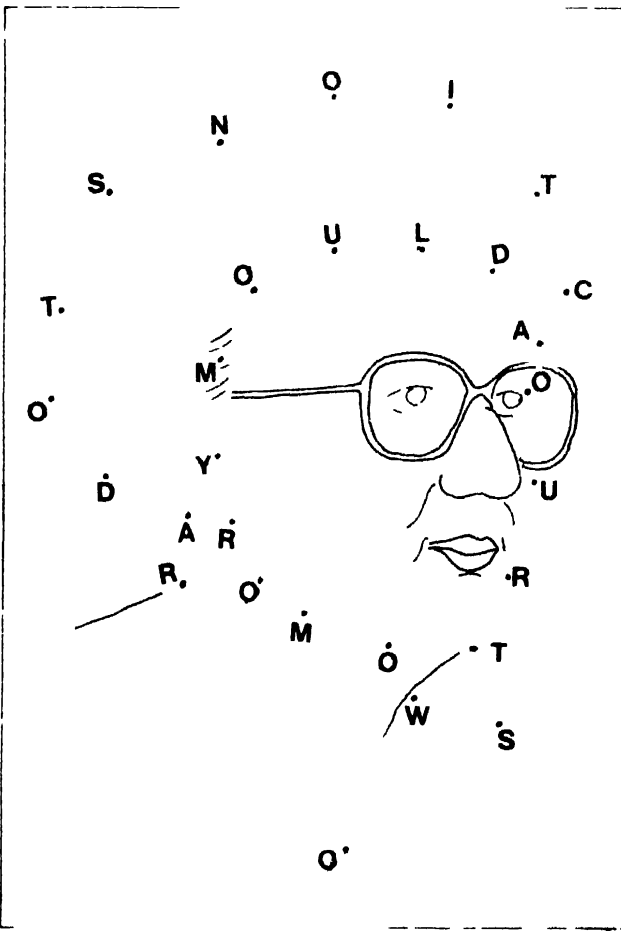
COLUMN I

Arm
 Back
 Cheek
 Finger
 Foot
 Head
 Hip
 Jaw
 Leg
 Lip
 Mouth
 Nail
 Neck
 Palm
 Skeleton
 Tooth

COLUMN II

Ache
Band
Bone
Breaker
Candy
Flask
Line
Piece
Polish
Print
Rest
Service
Spinner
Step
Stick
Waters

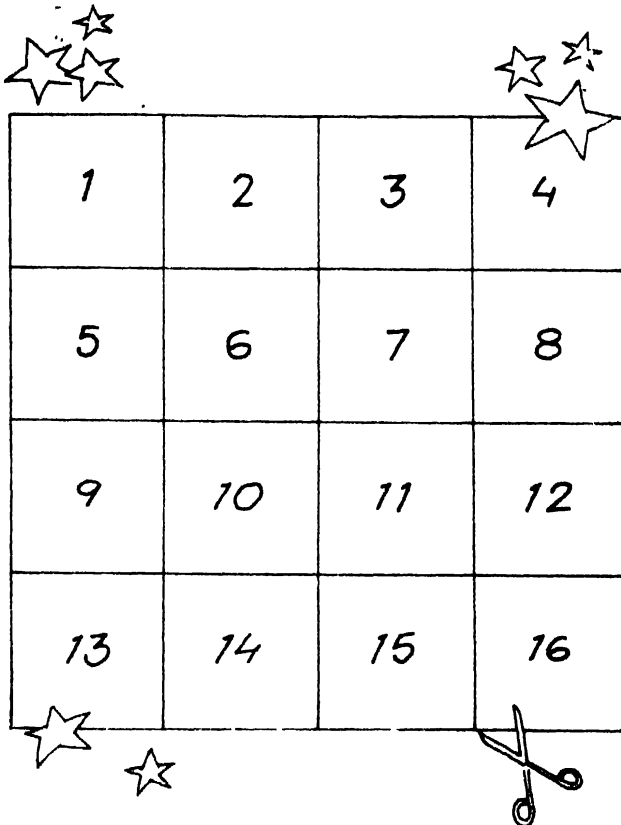
Shape Sleuth



Dot-to-dot with a difference! I expect you have guessed who the person in this picture is. If you join the dots, beginning at the A inside a small square and proceed along a certain direction, you will get a famous quote by this person.

TEASERS

Really?



Here is a different sort of a magic square! It looks ordinary enough: just numbers from 1 to 16, and numbers in rows and columns don't even add up to the same total!

Just try this little trick. Fold the square along the lines in any manner whatsoever, holding the square facing you. Get it to the size of one small square. Now cut off all the edges so that the 16 squares are all separate. Carefully, without disturbing the position of the squares, pick up the ones with the numbers hidden (or all the face-down squares). The number will be always 68! Can you guess (without calculating) what the sum of the numbers on the face-up squares will be?

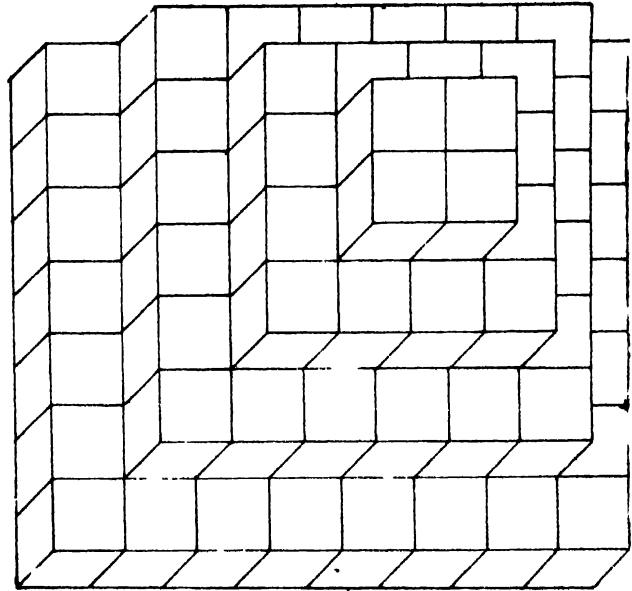
Wit Sharpener

Four friends grew up together, but had varying interests in life. Mac Soni wanted to become an astronaut, but Rana Stout was inclined towards a masonic career. N. Akber wished to receive acclaim as a musician, and Muni Sica wanted to become a banker.

Man proposes, God disposes. Their interests had rubbed off on each other, and each one of them ended up with a job which he hadn't aspired for. Also, while no two friends had the same vocation, each had a job which one of the others had originally wanted. Based upon the following clues, can you say what each one became:

1. Rana and the banker played golf together over weekends.
2. Mac cooked for the whole week on Sundays, and did his shopping and washing on Saturdays. He loved indoor games.
3. The musician disliked golf, but was an avid tennis player.

eyeball Bender

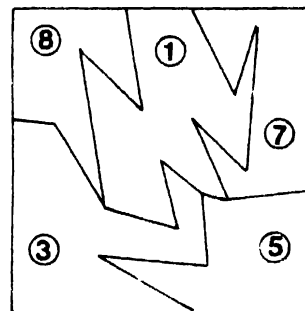


Do you see this as steps leading down to a small bath or an arrangement of blocks? It's not as simple as it seems. How many blocks in this shape?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Figure it Out: Number 3.

Shape Sleuth:

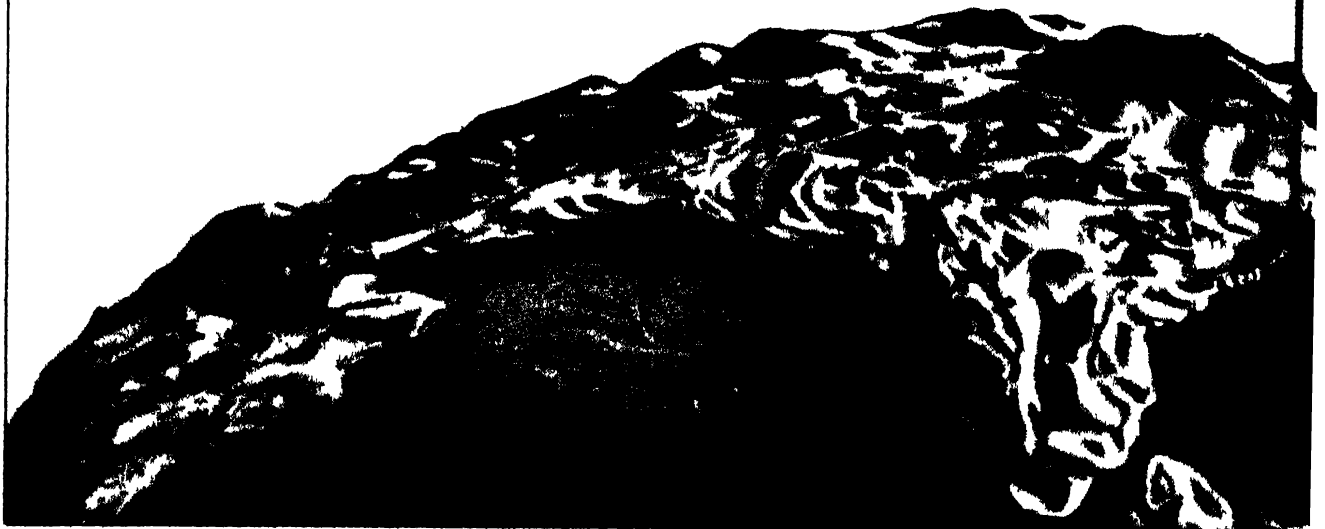
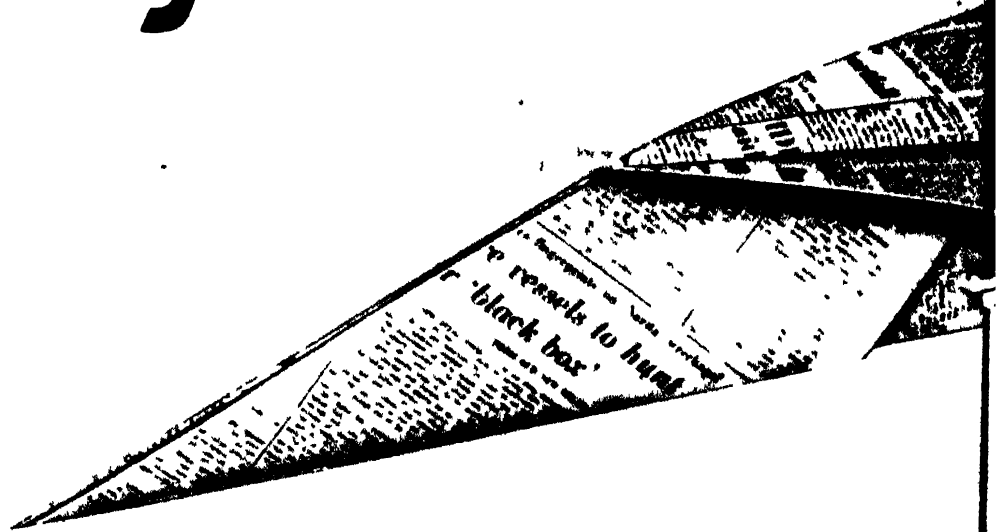


Party Piffle:

P	R	I	A	N	K	A
B	A	S	A	N	T	I
F	A	R	Z	A	N	A
B	H	A	V	A	N	A
V	A	T	S	A	L	A
S	A	N	G	I	T	A
S	A	V	I	T	R	I

Look Again: Number 3 because it is the only right hand.
A-maze-ing Journey: The airport is closer.
Witsharpener: 201

**"Okay, okay, but how
can you take me**





How far anyway?"

Consider: The Times of India daily offers you excellent coverage with prime English readership in West and North, through its Bombay, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Lucknow Editions. And, through associate agreements, Jaipur and Bangalore as well.

The Economic Times, as India's leading financial daily, gives you the business and professional readership in Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta. The Maharashtra Times gives you Maharashtra and parts of Goa, while the Navbharat Times gives you Delhi and the surrounding North, with the advantage of a substantial Bombay readership. Add to that the national magazines that cover most interest groups, and you'll understand just how far we can take you.

With that kind of a reach, it's no wonder The Times of India Group is the backbone of any media plan.

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VARIETY

CHESS

Soviet defector Lev Alburt scored a remarkable victory in the 1984 US Closed Championship, winning by a clear margin of 1½ points and including no fewer than 9 wins in his 17 games, the kind of performance which has been virtually unknown since the heady days of Bobby Fischer.

The most curious feature of his result was that whereas in previous championships the field had queued up to bash his beloved Alekhine Defence, this time round only one dared to challenge him – and lost.

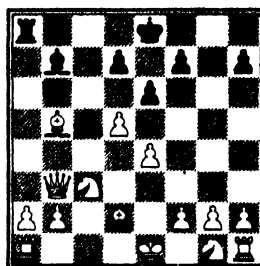
Alburt has his own specialised, intricate and very tricky repertoire and an example of how quickly the unsuspecting can come to grief is illustrated by the following massacre

White: J. Benjamin. Black: L. Alburt. Volga Gambit. US Championship 1984.

1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 P-QB4 P-QB4
3 P-Q5 P-QN4 4 PxP P-QR3
5 P-K3

Accepted as one of White's most solid choices, denying Black the extra development of 5 PxP BxP.

Alburt (Black) to move



Benjamin (White)

5 ... B-N2 6 N-QB3 Q-R4!7
7 B-Q2 Q-N3

A highly original way of organising play against White's QP. If 8 P-K4 PxP 9 BxP NxKP!

8 Q-N3 PxP 9 BxP P-K3
10 P-K4

Little could White have suspected what is about to befall him.

DIAGRAM

10 ... NxKPII 11 NxN BxP
12 Q-Q3 P-B4 13 N-N5 BxNP
14 Q-K2 BxR 15 P-B3

Maybe better is 15 NxKP B-K5 16 N-N5 with some compensation for the exchange. The attempt to intern the bishop, proves unsuccessful.

15 ... R-R3!

For after 16 BxR NxR there is no trace of attack left and it will cost too much to win the bishop in the corner.

16 P-QR4 B-K2 17 N(1)-R3 P-R3
18 P-R5 Q-N2 19 NxKP RxP
20 QxR QxB 21 Q-K2 QxNP
22 R-Q1 N-B3 23 K-B2 Q-Q5+
24 B-K3 Q-R5+ 25 K-N1 QxN
26 KxB NxP 27 BxP N-B3
28 BxB NxR 29 R-KN1 K-B2
30 RxP+ KxR 31 Resigns.

There are no more checks after 31 QxN+ K-N3 32 Q-Q6+ K-R4

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

The Bulletin at the CAC Championship in Venezuela ran a Horror Story Competition. One of the entries (reported in the IBPA Bulletin) concerned these North-South hands:

♠ 5
♥ 8
♦ A Q J 10 8 6
♣ K Q 8 4 2

♣ 5 led

♠ K 10 7 3
♥ Q 10 5 3
♦ —
♣ A J 9 6 3



This was the bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♣	2♦	2♣
No	No	3♣	No
3NT	No	4♣	No
4NT	No	5♦	No
6♣	No	No	No

North's Three Spades was poor (better Five Clubs) and South's 4NT horrible for various reasons. West led a club and East followed suit. How should South play? How many diamonds should he ruff early on? Think it out. This was the full hand:

♠ 5
♥ 8
♦ A Q J 10 8 6
♣ K Q 8 4 2

♠ A J 9 8 6
♥ K J 4 2
♦ 9 5 3
♣ 5

♠ K 10 7 3
♥ Q 10 5 3
♦ —
♣ A J 9 6 3

♠ Q 4 2
♥ A 9 7 6
♦ K 7 4 2
♣ 10 7

If you have worked out the play in detail you will have reached the conclusion that South must not play to bring down ♦K in three rounds, because even if he achieves this he will have no trump in his hand for the losing singleton. He must simply draw trumps and play East for ♦K.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

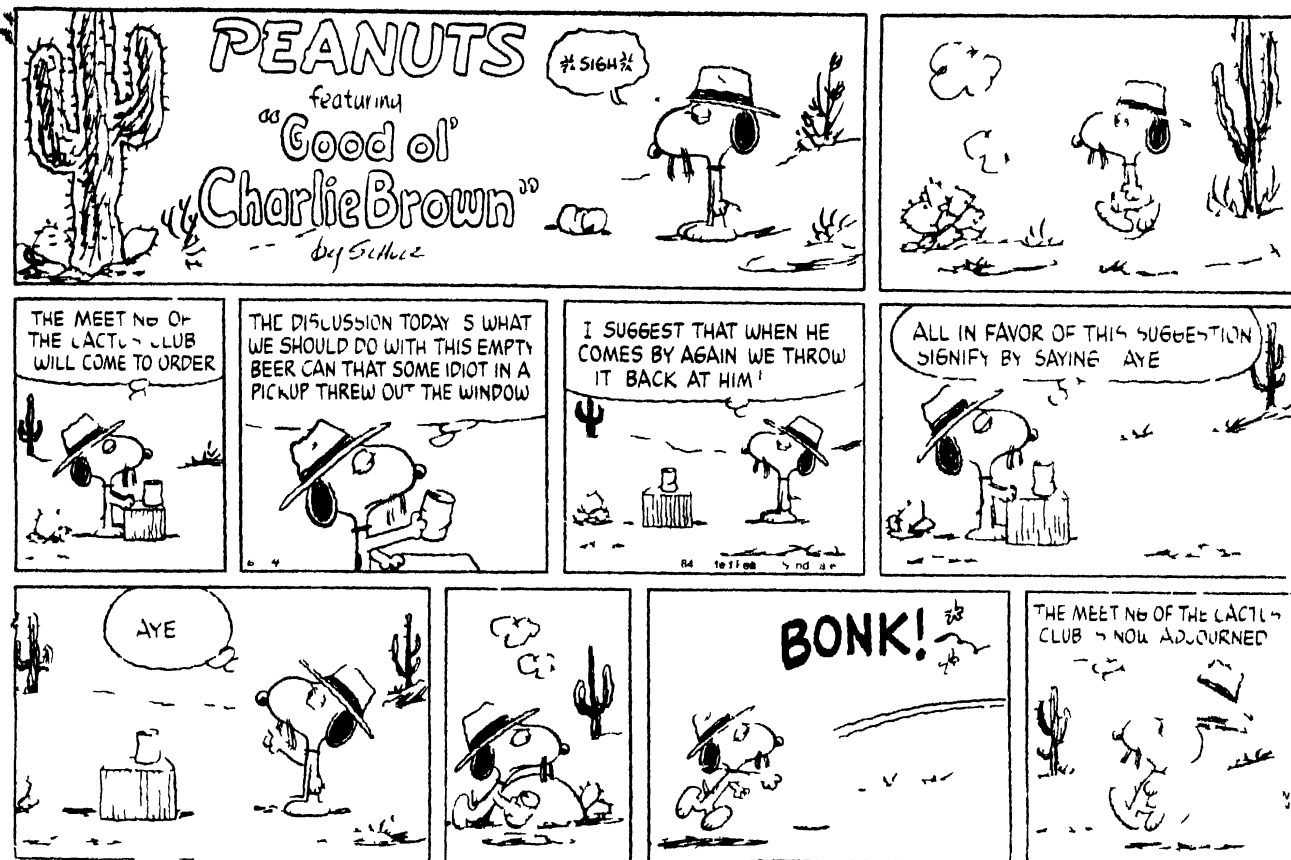
QUESTIONS

- What do the following have in common: Leonard Bernstein, Mstislav Rostropovich, Leopold Stokowski and Zubin Mehta?
- Where in India is the Victoria Hall Museum?
- What is a biodegradable?
- The Jolly Topir*, *Malle Bobbe* and *The Laughing Cavalier* are paintings by which famous Dutch painter?
- Name the Polish-born French scientist who was awarded a Nobel Prize in physics for the discovery of radium and polonium?
- How is Frederick Austerlitz better known as?

- The Achaemenid dynasty ruled over which country?
- A delicate balance, *Seascape*, *Tiny Alice* and *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* are the works of a famous American playwright. Name him.
- In Greek mythology, who is the brother of Zeus and the god of the underworld?
- What do the initials UNRISD stand for?
- Madagascar, Mauritius, Zanzibar and Seychelles are islands located in which ocean?
- The Santosh trophy is awarded to the winners of the national football championships. Who are the present holders?
- How long is a lunar day?

- They are all conductors of orchestras.
- Udampur.
- Something which is easily decomposed by normal biological processes without environmental damage.
- Franz Hals.
- Madam Marie Curie.
- Fred Astaire.
- Persia.
- Edward Albee.
- Hades.
- United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- The Indian Ocean.
- Goa.
- About 330 hours or the equivalent of 14 days on earth.

ANSWERS



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Brave New World

When Rajiv Gandhi unfurled the national tricolour from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August, a new generation's takeover was solemnised, as the young Prime Minister himself confessed, he was the first person who had not participated in the struggle for the Indian independence to unfurl the flag from the hallowed spot. Rajiv Gandhi was three years old when Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the national flag and the Union Jack was ceremoniously pulled down on 15 August 1947. Two thirds of India's population today belongs to the generation of Rajiv Gandhi. And, perhaps, as a tribute to the occasion, on independence day this year, when the flag was unfurled, and the rose petals concealed in the flag were blown by the winds, three petals settled on Rajiv Gandhi: one on his cheek and one each on his shoulders. The brave new generation of independent India had taken over. But how brave is new India? If the authorities were to replay the video recording of the Red Fort ceremony this year, they will find that at one point when the Prime Minister said "*Bharat mazboot hai, duniya ke kisi dabao ke neeche nahin aa sakta* (India is strong, no one in the world can cow us down), the television cameras focussed on the cadets of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) who had been lined up for the occasion. The cadets were sitting rather informally (not in the manner a drill requires them to) and the front row cadets were gossiping. NCC cadets drawn for the occasion should have been alert. And even if they were lax, could not the Doordarshan authorities edit the shot before it was beamed on the national hook up?

Work, Don't Speak



Kamalapati Tripathi: the working president

Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi, the AICC(I) working president, is a pitiable man today. The old man of the Congress cannot even speak openly to the press. That is something that he loves doing.

Immediately after he had become the working president, his daily evening press briefings at the AICC(I) headquarters at 24 Akbar Road had become famous. Not only did the Congress(I) get good coverage in the press, there were also some interesting—perhaps inspired—leaks to the media on behind-the-scene Congress(I) affairs. The Con-

gress(I) leadership soon realised they had made a mistake in giving Tripathi such a long rope and his briefing sessions were abruptly ended. Only recently a group of journalists went to his residence and requested him to resume his sessions with the press, if only once a week. They are perhaps tired of the cut and dry stuff they get from the present general secretaries of the AICC(I). "Sure sure," said Panditji, "whenever you want." But then, he never came to the AICC(I) headquarters on the promised day. Perhaps the working president only "works." He does not speak.

RSS Accounts

Akshil Bharatiya Vidyalay Parishad (ABVP), the RSS dominated students' wing of the erstwhile Jana Sangh (now BJP) has been in virtual control of the Delhi University Students' Union since the last 13 years. Only during the Janata days did a Congress backed candidate become the president. Otherwise without a break the ABVP has controlled the union, whose accounts have not

been audited over these years. One reason for the ABVP having its way was the complacency in the part of the Congress student leaders. Now a young MP, Mukul Wasnik (who is in his mid Twenties) has been given charge of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI). As a first step, Wasnik, who hails from Nagpur, has raised the question of unaudited accounts to counter the RSS on the campus.

Love's Labour Lost?

The agreement between the government and the Assam leaders it seems had to be announced in Parliament on the evening of 14 August. One of the indications came when a deputy secretary in the home ministry sent a list of 61 Assam leaders to the Parliament house reception requesting that their passes be immediately made for they had to be in the galleries by 5.30 pm. The reception officers threw a fit. Neither was the home ministry list complete in all its respects nor was there time enough to prepare 61 passes. But somehow since they were told that it was an "extremely important" matter they sat down and did the job in time. The appointed hour—5.30 pm—came and went. Soon it was six in the evening but the 61 never came. Finally the hapless reception officers were told that the Assam leaders would not be coming for there was to be no announcement immediately. Love's labour lost? Perhaps not because the receptionists had not done the job with any amount of love at all.

I-Day Records

For the first time since 1947, the ramparts of the Red Fort saw a Prime Minister of India unfurl the tricolour in the presence of his spouse. Sonia Gandhi became the first Prime Minister's spouse to attend the ceremony. Lal Bahadur Shastri, Morarji Desai and Charan Singh's wives were not seen on the historic ramparts when their husbands unfurled the flag. Therefore, 15 August 1985, will go down in history for many firsts: the security screen, the announcement on Assam, the takeover of a new generation and the presence of the PM's spouse.

D.E. Nizamuddin

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a Bagpiper on the rocks



BAGPIPER

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Assam: What Next ?

SUNDAY



THE DEATH OF A SAINT

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal

(1932 - 1985)

Haiku In Japanese, it's a poem. On you, it's a sensation.



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SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA

Sant Longowal's was not the first murder in which the assailants posed as securitymen. When Lalit Maken and his wife Gitanjali were done to death at their residence in West Delhi on 31 July, the sten-

The Prime Minister while addressing the Indian Police Service probationers at Hyderabad recently had hinted that he was unhappy with the present state of affairs in the security and intelligence set-up. Reforms can come later. To begin with, will the present system be streamlined? The deaths of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Lalit and Gitanjali Maken and Sant Longowal have shown the securitymen in poor light. The image created by the Anil Aggarwal episode is worse.

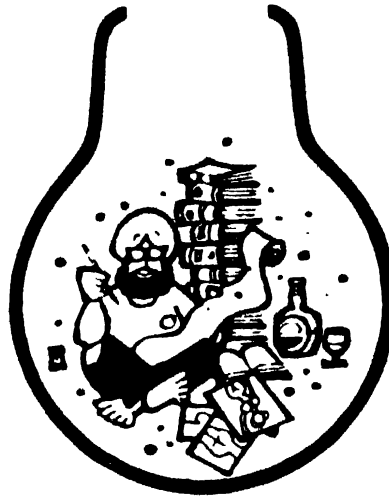
Animal Sixth Sense

Some weeks ago in another column I had written of the uncanny sixth sense that some animals, birds and insects possess: the vulture's ability to spot a carcass from several miles, the dog's ability to sniff dope concealed in the bottom of suitcase, and so on. M.L. Ahuja of Nanakpura, New Delhi, narrates yet another instance taken from the autobiography of the late Sardar Gurbaksh Singh, founder of Preet Nagar (now on our border with Pakistan) and editor of *Preet Lari*. He writes of the railway station master of Quetta which was devastated by an earthquake in 1935. The station master returned home late at night after seeing the last train leave. He was tired and wanted to sleep but his dog got him by his trousers and dragged him out of the house. A few moments later the earth shook. Most of Quetta was reduced to a rubble and thousands of sleeping people killed by the falling of debris. The station master and his dog were among the few who escaped.

Samiron Sarkar of Calcutta has sent me another instance of a cat living in a block of apartments opposite the Lal Bazar police station. The cat had a litter of four kittens. A few days after giving birth to them she spotted an apartment in a block of flats in a neighbourly building occupied by a kind lady. One by one she took her kittens by scruffing their necks and deposited them in a corner of the lady's bedroom. That night a fire broke out in the other building and destroyed the room in which the cat had littered. The incident was reported in all Calcutta's papers.

Canada and the Air India Disaster

One advantage of being a Member of Parliament as well as a columnist is to be able to air views which are ruled out by the presiding officer. I had given notice of special mention on a personal letter written by Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, to Rajiv Gandhi which Mulroney had released to the Canadian press. A clipping was sent to me by an agitated Indian national, K. Sabir, who felt that its publication in Toronto's *Globe & Mail* was a violation of diplomatic propriety. Since it also deals with security measures taken at Canadian and Indian airports and goes out of its way to tender advice to our Prime Minister on matters which are entirely his business, I felt the issue deserved to



be debated in Parliament. vice-president R. Venkataraman who presides over the Rajya Sabha did not think so. That was his judgement. This is mine.

It may be recalled that the flight of the Air India plane which went down in the sea with 329 people aboard and the Canadian Pacific plane which narrowly escaped disaster emanated from Canada. Explosive devices were planted in them, in one of the three Canadian airports: Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. Canada is the nerve centre of Indian extremists from where they maintain liaison with their counterparts in Punjab. It is largely in Canada that the buffoonery of Khalistani consulates, passports and currency are to be found and where the megalomaniac Jagjit Singh Chauhan is often seen. It was after the air disaster that Rajiv Gandhi made the perfectly innocuous statement that the govern-

ment of Canada "was not being stern enough with terrorists earlier" and the *Times of India* described its attitude as "could-not-care-less."

Brian Mulroney took umbrage. Canadians did care; their airport security was "at least as intensive as at airports, in, for example, Bombay and Calcutta," he maintained. "What more did Rajiv expect them to do within the limits of their democratic society?" he asked. "In the absence of constructive advice, condemnation of this country's (Canada's) efforts may strike many Canadians as gratuitous," he added. The Canadian Prime Minister went on to write: "I wish to avoid mutual recriminations as well as interference in India's internal affairs. Clearly however, the terrorism now implanted on Canadian soil has its roots in the unresolved political tensions of the Punjab." In short, he told Rajiv to put his own house in order before pointing the accusing finger at Canada.

Three questions need to be answered. First is about diplomatic propriety. Why did the Canadian Prime Minister release his personal communication to the press? Have diplomatic channels between the two countries broken down? Second, what have the Canadian authorities done so far to apprehend the two men named as possible culprits? Canadian police boast of always getting their man; they have not yet got a clue about these two rascals. And now that Rajiv has in fact put his house in order, what are the Canadian authorities doing to prevent Chauhan and like-minded people from continuing their violent crusade against the Sikh community and India?

Air India officials at Heathrow airport with the two boxes containing the voice and flight recorders of the ill-fated Kanishka



Shun Terrorism

In the cover story *What Will Baba Joginder Do Now?* (11/17 August) Sanjeev Gaur has correctly analysed the present mood of the people of Punjab. Though the majority have supported the accord, a few like Baba Joginder struck a hostile note by adopting a disapproving stand. Baba Joginder Singh should think about the benefits of the accord on the lives of the people of Punjab and stop his followers from committing violent and antinational activities. The interviews with Baba Joginder Singh, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Arjun Singh and Sant Longowal made an interesting reading. I feel Baba Joginder was not right in blaming Rajiv Gandhi for the 1984 November riots. If the Prime Minister had not taken appropriate measures at that time the riots would have continued for a longer period.

Sanjay Chopra Hoshiarpur (Punjab)

• Baba Joginder did not view the Punjab accord in a favourable light. However, almost all the Sikhs residing outside Punjab in India have welcomed the agreement. Only a few Sikhs from remote villages might be supporting Baba Joginder. The latter should settle all disputes amicably, putting aside religious fanaticism, for the welfare of all Sikhs.

Bhupen Bose Jamshedpur

• I am doubtful about the ultimate success of the Punjab accord. After the settlement was reached, one thought the Punjab imbroglio would never surface again. But it is disheartening to note that prominent Sikh leaders like Baba Joginder and others have opposed the accord. They should relinquish their fight for supremacy and support the Punjab agreement for the welfare of the common masses.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• It was not correct of Baba Joginder Singh to refer to the Prime Minister as "the son of a Panditani mother and a Parsi father." The Prime Minister should be talked about in a more respectful manner by every responsible citizen of India. So much coverage should not be given to such an irresponsible person whose son followed policies of terrorism.

Mansoor Ahmed, Calcutta

• I K Gujral advocates a delayed poll in Punjab to further strengthen the bond of cordiality between the Hindus and the Sikhs. He also pleads for a Hindu-Sikh coalition government as was formed in 1977-79.



during the Janata and the Akali Dal regime. However, he failed to mention specifically that with the reemergence of Indira Gandhi in 1980 the cult of bloodshed and riots began. In fact, it was Mrs Gandhi who was responsible for creating the monster called Bhindranwale.

C I Vairavan Madras

• If Baba Joginder Singh clears his misconceptions regarding government policies, the accord can be more successfully implemented. However, I feel this is not the opportune time to hold elections in the state.

N Ellango Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu)

Buying Peace

Punjab Peace at Last? (4-10 August) was highly informative. The situation in Punjab, both before and after the accord, was vividly portrayed. Our young Prime Minister has displayed statesmanship of a high order in tackling one of the worst internal problems the country had to face since independence. However, the accord could not have been reached but for the sagacity and courage shown by Sant Har Chand Singh Longowal.

V Marinas Fernando, Nazareth (Tamil Nadu)

• The signing of the Punjab accord has raised new hopes of unity, amity and cordial relations among the people of Punjab. Whereas on the one hand the Prime Minister kept his promise of solving the Punjab crisis on a priority basis, on the other hand

the moderate Akali leaders took a courageous step by dissociating themselves completely from the extremists. Now, the government, the moderates, the nationalist forces and the Sarbat Khalsa should condemn and take action against all elements of dissension.

Balbir Singh, Patna Sahib

• The whole nation was relieved when the accord was reached between the central government and the Akali leadership. An impasse ended with it and the ushering in of a new era can be foreseen. The accord has been a major breakthrough in the political career of Rajiv Gandhi. The decision to give Chandigarh to Punjab is sagacious.

Tauqun Usman, Gaya

• The accord should be welcomed by one and all. After five years of violence and communal strife in Punjab, there is a sense of relief. It took extraordinary skill and courage on the part of both Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal in settling this crucial problem. Let us hope that peace will be long lasting.

M Anwar Azad Ansari Bhabua

• I found Khushwant Singh's *Punjab Lives Again* really worth reading. I welcome his suggestion to award Bharat Ratnas to Rajiv Gandhi and Arjun Singh. It was shocking to know that Zail Singh was not taken into confidence while solving the Punjab crisis. I quite understand Mr Singh's apprehension of the mischief that can be caused by Prakash Singh Badal and G S Tohra. However, his fear of Sikhs losing their identity and "lapsing back into the Hindu fold" is unfounded. History stands testimony to the fact that the people of one community have always tried to safeguard the interest of the other.

A K Ghosh, Gumla

• The extremists surprised at the quick settlement of the Punjab issue, may have been put off balance for a while, but I fear they will carry out even more nefarious and destructive activities just out of frustration. Of course, these extremists are wholeheartedly supported by foreign conspirators working against India's unity. Not only are the security measures to be tightened, the forces of extremism should be made to realise the utter futility of their strategy.

H K L Gandotra, Kotli Jakolari

• The Punjab accord was an example of brotherly compromise rarely witnessed in India. This agreement of peace will go down in letters of gold in the pages of Indian history.

Amit Sharangi, Rohini (West Bengal)

A Hell on Earth

I was very upset on reading the special report, *Starvation in Kalahandi* (11-17 August). It was hard to believe that people were selling their children in order to fight starvation. In desperation people were feeding on wild roots and leaves of trees. Youngsters have left home in search of livelihood and have never returned. Kalahandi is a veritable hell on earth.

M. Mohammed Nur Dhabatto, Madras

• Sarada P Nanda's report was shocking. It was indeed distressing to learn that such misery exists in our country. While going all out to help the drought victims of Ethiopia, the government should not neglect our own people suffering in Kalahandi. I cannot but admire the young MLA Bhakta Charan Das. I only wish our ministers were like him.

Jennifer Ann Vincent, Madras



Starving villagers in Kalahandi

Wise Counsel

Probably for the first time after his retirement, the former Chief Justice Y.V. Chandrachud freely talked about his personal and official life in "We do not have Enough Good Judges" (21-27 July). The conversation made us aware of the embarrassing situations in which a judge may find himself in the course of his work. Post-retirement sufferings are not uncommon in India. At least the case of Y.V. Chandrachud, has been brought to the notice of the public.

S. Kalidash, Maikangiri (Orissa)

• Y.V. Chandrachud is absolutely right when he says that a judge should not join politics after retirement, especially a Chief Justice. I only hope that all judges follow his wise opinion. The government, too, should not meddle in the affairs of a Chief Justice.

Dayanand Dubey, Deoghar (Bihar)

Vilifying a Sacred Democratic Institution

I was pained and surprised to go through the comments of Ram Raja Prasad Singh in 'The Bomb Blasts were the Beginning of our Revolution.' (11-17 August). The conversation with Saumitra Banerjee is full of lies and insinuations and has tried to cast aspersions on the sacred institution of Nepal. The self-styled politician has of late started a vilification campaign against Nepal.

Monarchy is the most sacred institution of the Nepalese people. Besides being a permanent symbol of unity and territorial integrity of the kingdom, this institution has always played a very significant role in consonance with the aspirations of the people. The illustrious monarchs of the Shah dynasty, right from the days of His Late Majesty King Prithvi Narayan Shah, have always kept the interest of the people and the country uppermost in their minds. The unification of many principalities into an integrated and cohesive kingdom of Nepal was done by this great king. The noble successors of the founder of the Shah dynasty have always identified themselves with the national interest.

His Late Majesty King Tribhuvan, the father of the nation, set a unique example by staking his throne and leading the popular revolution of 1951 which freed Nepal from a century-old autocratic rule of the Ranas. The assumption of the people's lead-

ership by the monarch for the restoration of the democratic rights has no parallels in the political history of the world. His Late Majesty King Mahendra, who was instrumental in modernising Nepal, introduced a partyless democratic panchayat system. The system based as it is on the active participation of all the people without any recourse to party squabbles, has proved suitable to the country.

In recent years, the panchayat system has been further democratised in consonance with the wishes of the people. His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev proclaimed the historic national referendum for ascertaining the people's choice of the political system. The panchayat system got a clear cut mandate of the people. Our system has all the fundamental tenets of democracy like the election of the national legislature (Rastriya Panchayat) on the basis of universal adult franchise, election of the Prime Minister by the House, accountability of the government to the House and the provision of an independent judiciary. Therefore, our people enjoy all the fundamental political rights like in any other democracy in the world.

The interview has also tried to spread canards and lies as regards Nepal's economy. His Majesty's gov-

ernment has given all necessary incentives to the private sector to participate in all development works. We welcome participation even by individuals and enterprises from foreign countries to set up joint industrial ventures in Nepal and full-scale safeguards have been provided to them. The growing interest shown by friendly countries including India to invest in Nepal is a clear testimony to this fact.

As far as the recent bomb blasts leading to the tragic loss of innocent lives and property in Nepal are concerned, these acts are the handiworks of a handful of terrorists who have no love and affection for their country and people. As Nepal is a peace-loving country dedicated to the declaration of Nepal as a zone of peace and pursues a peaceful policy of non-alignment in international affairs, we are very alert regarding the activities of such criminals who are bent upon disturbing peace in our region. His Majesty's government is fully capable of dealing with these terrorists under the rule of the law. The people of Nepal will never forgive terrorists and those supporting terrorism. The recent terrorist acts in some parts of Nepal have been condemned by all including the government of India.

Durga Prakash Panday, Consul General for Nepal, Calcutta

THE DEATH OF A SAINT

The wound will never heal

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal should not be mourned merely as the man who signed the accord with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He was the tallest Sikh leader of his times. He first shot into national prominence ten years ago when he mobilised a massive democratic movement in Punjab against the Emergency. This, combined with the alliance between the Janata and the Akali Dal (which came to power in Punjab in 1977) turned the state into a fortress of anti-Congress forces. The emergence of the powerful trio of Sant Longowal, Prakash Singh Badal (who was then the chief minister) and Gurcharan Singh Tohra (the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee president) was viewed with alarm by the Congress leadership. Certain forces within the Congress built up Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to counter the trio. Agent provocateurs caused the Akali-Nirankari clashes, the killing of Lala Jagat Narain, the build-up of Bhindranwale as the militant leader of the Sikh masses, culminating in his arrest in Chowk Mehta in late 1981 and his subsequent moving into the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, turning the holy place into a bastion of anti-national and anti-social elements. A train of events was let loose just because the popularity of the Longowal-Badal-Tohra leadership had to be demolished. The behind-the-scenes managers from New Delhi knew that it was not easy to counter the trio given the anti-Congress atmosphere prevalent in Punjab since the mid-Seventies. So, they created a Frankenstein: Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The soul of this Frankenstein still exists, otherwise there would not have been jubilation in the Golden Temple by the supporters of Baba Joginder Singh soon after Longowal's murder (Jagdev Singh Talwandi of the "United" Akali Dal has denied that there was merry-making by his partymen, but from all available accounts it seems

that Talwandi being the only senior politician in the Baba Joginder Singh camp, was merely reacting to a situation as a politician should). Interestingly, Atma Singh, who had been used by certain forces earlier during the SGPC elections to break the trio, is today with Baba Joginder Singh.

Sant Longowal's death is not merely a setback to the peace efforts in Punjab but also the beginning of a dangerous phase in the politics of the



state. It has been seen, over the years, that Akali leaders seeking a settlement with the Congress and New Delhi have run into rough weather in Sikh politics. Master Tara Singh, it may be recalled, was the most powerful Sikh leader who not only controlled the Akali Dal in a near-dictatorial manner but also held sway over the affairs of the SGPC. His offer of merger with the Congress in 1957 led to his fall from grace. His failure to secure the Punjab Suba after the much-trumpeted fast-unto-death in 1961, without yielding any significant concessions from New Delhi, sealed his career. He was effectively challenged by his

close lieutenant, Sant Fateh Singh, who founded his own Akali Dal in 1962 and mobilised the Jat-Sikh peasantry. It is evident from the history of the Sikh response to the Akali Dal in the post-independence years that whenever the Akali leadership has articulated the demands of the Jat Sikh peasantry and combined an agitational approach with parliamentary tactics, they have been able to hold their sway over the Sikh mind. The task before the acting president of the Akali Dal, Surjit Singh Barnala, therefore, is not easy.

The accord signed on 24 July, while conceding most demands of the Akali Dal, ignored the most vital aspect which is needed for peace in Punjab. After Operation Bluestar and the November riots in Delhi, Patna, Kanpur and Bokaro, the Sikh mind has been obsessed with questions other than Chandigarh and river waters. While these issues were important, the hurt pride of the Sikh community was the topmost concern of the Sikh leadership. After the accord, the SGPC has filed claims amounting to a thousand crores of rupees for the damage done to the gurdwaras. The fact that Badal walked out of the meeting which elected Barnala as the acting president of the Akali Dal, on 25 August is significant. For Governor Arjun Singh, who has still got his finger in Madhya Pradesh politics, holding elections in Punjab was expedient. He wanted to be known as the man of peace, for the moment, notwithstanding the events of the future. Sant Longowal had wanted the elections to be postponed. The election machinery has been activated in Punjab. The state cannot afford to witness any more bloodshed. If the death of a saint can bring sanity, then Sant Longowal's life was not lost in vain. But will the blood-soaked spot at Sherpur gurdwara put a stop to the insanity in Punjab?

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

Setback in Punjab

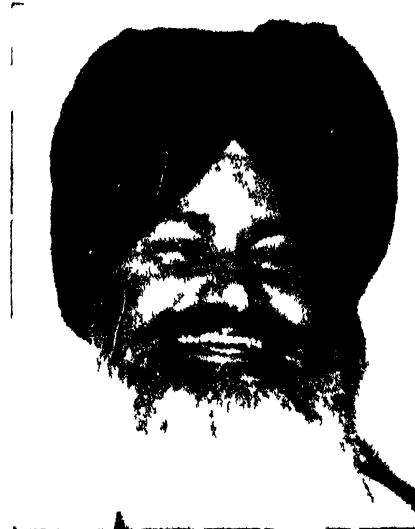
By Khushwant Singh

It is said that when Sant Longowal signed the accord with Rajiv Gandhi on the evening of Wednesday, the 24th of July, the Prime Minister took off his bullet proof vest and presented it to Longowal saying, "Santji, I will not be needing this any more, but perhaps you will." The story is apocryphal. It turned out to be tragically apt. Neither the bullet proof vest (if he ever wore one) nor the commando unit, nor the half a dozen security guards who accompanied Sant Longowal wherever he went were able to save him from assassins who had sworn to do or die. He met his end as he would have undoubtedly liked to have met it after having said his prayers in a gurdwara.

The first question that comes to mind is about the numerical strength of the terrorists and their organisation. How many are they? Is there a master mind which directs their activities, finances them and furnishes them with arms? How long will they go on killing people? The second and connected question is of the attitude of the Sikh masses towards these killers. How is it that two of Sant Longowal's four assassins were able to get away through a congregation which is said to have numbered over 5000? Did not any one of them dare to grapple with them? Or was it the proverbial attitude of indifference "aseen kee laina?" ("What have we to do with it?") After "Operation Bluestar" and the repressive measures taken by the army and paramilitary forces, Sikh terrorists gained a measure of respectability and were given sanctuary in gurdwaras and homes. That passive sympathy had slowly eroded as these terrorists went from one senseless killing to another. With the signing of the accord most people began to treat terrorists as outlaws and if not actively willing to expose them were at least unwilling to afford them shelter. The manner in which two of Longowal's killers were allowed to escape makes us unsure of the people's attitude towards them. As long as terrorists enjoy passive sympathy of the masses, there is little hope of getting the better of them. Once they are deprived of it, no matter how many they are and how well-

organised, how readily furnished with arms and cash, their days will be numbered. One good that may come out of Sant Longowal's martyrdom is the feeling of revulsion against these killers.

The death of Sant Longowal is a tragedy of national dimensions. It has deprived the Sikhs of the one man who could have carried the panth with him and cut the upstart Baba Joginder Talwandi faction to size. In the personalised politics that obtain in our country, with the passing of a leader most of what he stood for goes into abeyance and his following dissipates. The vacuum created by the Sant's disappearance will not be filled for quite some time to come.



Sant Longowal: end of an era

His death has also deprived the Punjab of a leader in whom Punjabi Hindus could repose trust because his was the first voice after Bhindranwale's hateful utterances against the Hindus and he talked of restoring fraternal relations between the two brother communities. The Sant's going will also be a loss to the country because he helped Rajiv Gandhi to maintain the integrity of the country, and by putting his signatures to the accord, frustrated the designs of people who wanted to re-divide India to provide for a separate Sikh state, Khalistan. Although he was little known outside India, the Sant's death deprives the world of a

god fearing man of humility and courage who knowingly exposed himself to peril with the conviction that his cause was just. When asked if he was not afraid of being killed, he would smile, raise both his hands and exclaim "Ussee nay jaan bakshee hai jad usdee marzee, usee nay lainee hai" (the Lord granted me life, when it pleases the Lord I will take it back). In the Punjab, saints are a dime a dozen. Of these only Harchand Singh Longowal was a true saint in the Gandhian mould.

The question uppermost in people's minds is what happens to the Longowal-Rajiv accord now? I am pretty certain, the accord will hold because barring the Baba Joginder Talwandi faction it has the near unanimous support of all Punjabis. Besides, anyone who steps into Sant Longowal's shoes will feel honour bound to see it through.

Then there is the timing of the elections. At the time of writing, the Congress(I) point of view is to go ahead on the schedule announced. Some Akali leaders, notably Balwant Singh and Barnala, both of whom were in Sant Longowal's negotiating team, are also for an early election as they feel they will be able to cash in on the name of the martyred Sant while the memory of his dastardly killing is still fresh in the minds of the people. However, there is a sizeable body of opinion both in the Congress and in the Akali party that an early election will result in more bloodshed. When every seat is contested by over a dozen candidates, the chances of some falling victims to violence and entailing fresh polls are high. Besides that there is little doubt that the Baba Joginder Talwandi faction will do its worst by opening up old wounds caused by "Operation Bluestar" and the carnage of Sikhs organised by Congress(I) leaders following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi and thus vitiate the atmosphere of cordiality between Hindus and Sikhs generated by the accord. This will certainly put the clock back. Punjab cannot afford to be divided between a Hindu Punjab and a Sikh Punjab, it has to be a Punjabi Punjab if it means to resume its first place as the most prosperous and the most go-ahead state of India.

Elections, the Right Step

By Janardan Thakur

Some future historian may well weave his account of Punjab in the Eighties round the characters of the two Sants, Bhindranwale and Longowal, who between them covered all the divergent strands in the tangled skein of Sikh politics. Both Sants, and yet how different! If the one spewed hate and violence, the other overflowed with love and peace. If the one became a martyr to the cause of separatism, the other is a martyr to the cause of unity. The end of Bhindranwale came as a national relief, the death of the other as a national grief. And yet they were Sants both. Did He who make the lamb make thee?

At another level it would be the tale of the two Gandhis—the one who let the genie out of the bottle, and the other who strove to put it back again. It was only the principal genie that was crushed by Operation Bluestar; scores of lesser geni are still abroad.

It may take a long time still, and many more grievous losses on the way, before terrorism is curbed and the seed of secessionism crushed. But the tide could well be turning. By killing Longowal the enemies of peace and unity have lost much more than they may reckon at the moment. It was the death of their own fiendish Sant and the tragic assault on the Golden Temple which had given the biggest boost to the extremists with extra-territorial loyalties. They had achieved what Bhindranwale could never do in his lifetime: a deep schism between the Sikhs and the Hindus all over. By killing Longowal they have largely undone the damage they had done to the people's psyche.

But the battle is still on, and it is not for the weak or the lily-livered to join. The battle is only for the brave who can die but once.

For Rajiv Gandhi the easiest and the safest course would have been to postpone the elections. Even the strongest votaries of democracy were pressing for the safe and easy path, but comes a time in the life of a nation when it either takes a hard course today or loses out on its tomorrows. Such a time it is for India now, and one must admire the young Prime Minister for refusing to flinch in the face of danger.

Elections are a logical corollary of the accord that Rajiv and Longowal



Arjun Singh (left), Arun Nehru and P.V. Narasimha Rao (right) at Sant Longowal's funeral

signed. A significant step had been taken towards peace and normalcy in Punjab, and to back out of elections at this stage would only have meant going several steps backward. Of course, Longowal's absence would mean a tremendous setback for the overall plan for Punjab, but then perhaps his martyrdom could bring about the desired poll results: a victory for the Akalis.

That, I have very little doubt, is part of New Delhi's overall strategy for a Punjab solution. Unbelievable as it may sound—for it is so much against the grain of the Congress(I)—the Prime Minister would for the first time be praying that his party loses in the Punjab Assembly elections. For the simple reason that a Congress(I) victory in the state would really mean going back to square one. There could of course be no guarantee that the Akalis coming to power in Punjab would mean an end to troubles, but certainly that would be the best bet for giving peace a chance.

How the Congress(I) will go about the task of getting defeated is a

different matter. It would certainly not be easy to convince the power-hungry partymen in the state that this is a sacrifice they must make for peace, but one must say Rajiv Gandhi is trying hard. That is what all his appeals to his partymen on how to "fight" the Punjab elections boil down to: our victory would be in defeat.

Many may laugh at this scenario, but I would like to believe it is not a wild fancy. After all, isn't it possible that the young Prime Minister may have another side to him? In the past he has used all the tricks and chicanery of his mother to win at the hustings, even when he could have won without any of it, but it is not only "continuity" that he promised, but also "change." And by way of change it is just possible that he may bring to his gigantic task a statesmanship which his mother often scoffed at.

The way ahead is strewn with dangers, but let's go on with prayers on our lips and courage in our hearts. Longowal showed us how.

The Martyred Saint

By Nikhil Chakravartty

On 20 August 1985, at a gurdwara in a Punjab village, a man was shot dead as he finished his speech in a gathering of about 5,000 people, launching his party's election campaign. Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was 53 years old when he was gunned down by a gang which claimed to have been politically opposed to him.

Settling political scores through bullets has happened before in our country. But every time that has taken place, the public response has been one of deep anxiety, premonitions about dark forces overtaking our democracy and tearing it apart by breeding hatred between communities or castes. Gandhiji was killed in 1948 by a Hindu fanatic who belonged to the tribe which went mad at his preaching communal harmony even in the midst of the searing experience of the partition of the country. Thirty-six years later, in 1984, Indira Gandhi was riddled with bullets because of her "crime" to have tried to put down with an iron hand those who were cowardly and were using the sacred precincts of temples to whip up communal acrimony by unleashing armed terrorism to the point of preparing the ground for secession of a part of the country from our motherland. And nearly ten months later, on 20 August, Sant Longowal fell to the assassin's gun because he made an honest effort to take his community and his state out of the blind alley into which they were dragged by the suicidal policy of extremist terrorism.

The Akali Party of which Sant Longowal was the chief, had some grievances and raised certain demands which became the platform of a protracted mass agitation. This generated bitter frustration and led the Sikh community nowhere, though it brought in its train huge wastage of the nation's resources. But nobody objected to their right to agitate.

The point of departure came when a so-called militant group took to terrorist tactics. The emergence of the Bhindranwale cult with its armed gangster methods vitiated Punjab's normal political process and brought forward the demand for Khalistan which is supposed to be carved out by seceding from the Indian union.

Bhindranwale's indiscriminate violence beginning with the butchering of the Nirankari Sikhs, sought to provoke communal clashes by the terrorist killing of non Sikhs. If communal riots had not taken place at that stage, it was mainly because of the sanity of the majority in the Sikh community as also the firm steps taken by the government. But Bhindranwale himself was not touched though he could easily have been nabbed at that stage.

Partly, this was due to the fact that the Sikh leaders within the Congress were divided on this score, but largely, because the Akali leaders, of whom Sant Longowal was the chief, took no steps to either curb or con-

Sant Longowal—in its kidglove approach to Bhindranwale with disastrous consequences for the Sikh community as a whole.

Why did Sant Longowal and the Akali leadership harbour Bhindranwale? The reasons for this, as could be gauged by outsiders, are roughly two. First the Akali leadership was a divided house and Longowal presided over an outfit with conflicting pulls and pressures. That was why, despite several serious attempts at negotiating with the centre over their demands, they either backed out or shifted their position. Each leader was indulging in one-upmanship by exercising his veto on one point or other in the terms of a possible settlement. It is no doubt true that the centre too shifted its position sometimes, but there is no gain saying the fact that the Akali leadership notoriously changed its position, raising fresh demands whenever a settlement was in the offing. This was obviously due to the disunity within the leadership—a point which needs to be stressed when one assesses Sant Longowal's leadership in those early days. There is no streak of a commanding personality in him that could unify the entire Akali camp.

This leads to the second factor that determined the Akali Dal's position vis-à-vis Bhindranwale. Since they themselves failed to make any headway on their own, they seemed to have calculated that Bhindranwale's terrorism could be used as a battering ram against the centre. The spate of terrorist acts by Bhindranwale's gang could, they seemed to have thought, force the centre to come to terms with the Akali Dal. It was this calculation—not unprecedented in the annals of political bankruptcy—that took the Akali Dal leaders to the extraordinary situation when they allowed Bhindranwale to install himself within the sanctuary of the Golden Temple and make it the base of his terrorist operations all over Punjab. It was reported at the time that Gurcharan Singh Tohra as the head of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) got Bhindranwale to settle down in the Akal Takht, but nowhere was there any indication that Sant Harchand Singh Longowal as the chief of the Akali

Sant Longowal's life ended as the day ends in his native Punjab in the monsoon: in crimson sunset framed by forbidding clouds.

demn Bhindranwale. This point needs to be stressed if we are to strive for an objective assessment of the Punjab situation. With all the homage that one could pay to Sant Longowal's martyrdom today, his responsibility for the crisis into which Punjab was almost inexorably dragged into two years ago, can hardly be glossed over if one were to adhere to any objective assessment. Political personalities are not just individual characters, with their life as interwoven the texture of an episode or a phase in political development even if we leave aside the question of evaluating their place in history in the long run. It is with this hindsight one cannot help looking back to the strange conduct of the Akali leadership—which certainly included

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Dal had his reservations, not to speak of serious objections to this step of harbouring Bhindranwale and thereby abetting terrorism.

Many of those who in the changed climate of today are liberal in their attack on Indira Gandhi for having ordered Operation Bluestar, could offer no alternative course in dealing with the dangerous situation. In fact, the records show that most of them—mainly non-Sikhs—approved of the army action to smoke out the Bhindranwale gang from the Golden Temple. It is undeniable that the Sikh sentiment was hurt at this operation against the community's sanctum, but the country can legitimately ask, what did the Sikh leaders do in the months and weeks preceding, to demand that the Golden Temple must not be permitted to be Bhindranwale's terrorist hideout? Not even a statement came from the leading lights in the Sikh community. Those well-meaning non-party Sikh leaders and the government could not get a single Akali leader including Sant Longowal to agree to the dislodgement of Bhindranwale from the Golden Temple.

After Operation Bluestar and the army clamp-down on Punjab, the Akali Dal leadership showed no signs of activity to put the state back on to the road of normalcy. It is argued that they being in detention, were immobilised. On the face of it, this sounds plausible. But if one studies the record of our national leaders during the freedom struggle, one gets an idea of the almost non-stop activity—even to the point of active negotiation with the British rulers—that they were engaged in when they had to spend years in prison. No political leader worth his salt switches off his activity once in prison. One is entitled to ask the question how the Akali leaders spent their days in detention. Was there rethinking of

their line of action, an awareness of the need for change in approach in the changed circumstances? A political leader gains eminence only when he or she tries to look beyond the immediate, and not just stay at the level of responses of understanding of his or her following.

This brings one to the last phase of Sant Longowal's career as a political leader. After Indira Gandhi's gruesome assassination followed by the pogrom on the Sikh community, which was not engineered by the Congress(I) local bosses though some of them indulged in it in the mass mood of bitter anger, instead of trying to assuage it—when Rajiv Gandhi took the correct step of releasing the Akali leaders as the first step towards a thaw in Punjab—Sant Harchand Singh Longowal's first extensive interview published in **SUNDAY** was disappointing; there was not a word of condemnation at the brutal killing of Indira Gandhi, not even an expression of sorrow at the heinous act.

It was only after he was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers and that too after long deliberations that he took a stand for reconciliation. He seemed to have realised then that Akali politics had reached a dead end and in the frustration that had spread over the entire Sikh community, there could be no place for the Akali leadership if it did not bestir itself for a return to normalcy. It was this which led ultimately to the memorandum of settlement that he signed with Rajiv Gandhi on 24 July.

In bringing about this rapport and rapprochement, three factors can be noted to have contributed: first, the firm hand with which the Punjab administration was run—with vigilance but without vendetta. Second, the important contribution made by

the well-wishers of the Akali Dal, both Sikh and non-Sikh, to persuade Sant Longowal to take a reasonable stand. Third—and this is perhaps the most important—Rajiv Gandhi's readiness to accommodate to the point of promptly conceding most of the Akali demands. He himself authenticated the commitment by signing the accord in his capacity as the Prime Minister of India. It is indeed a case of stooping to conquer.

After the 24 July accord, Sant Longowal certainly earned for himself the position of a national leader. At the same time, let it not be underestimated that he could not fully overcome the reservations and opposition within his own party to any settlement with the government. For one thing, the Akali Dal itself was split, with the aggressive wing regrouping itself under the 80-year old father of Bhindranwale, putting up the misleading signboard of the "United" Akali Dal. This has become the real bastion of extremism with the All India Sikh Student Federation providing its militant cover. The Bhindranwale terrorists which are yet to be smashed up are sheltered within this outfit. Secondly, even in the rest of the Akali Dal, Longowal could not persuade Prakash Singh Badal or Gurcharan Singh Tohra—leaders of no mean standing—to come out openly in support of the 24 July accord.

In this situation, Longowal could mount no campaign against the terrorists. He had begun to make public appeals for Hindu-Sikh unity, but with the dramatic decision by the centre to hold a snap poll in Punjab, the situation changed. The urge for Akali unity—including an understanding with the extremists—could be discerned, a position which Sant Longowal could not possibly have resisted as could be made out by the wording of the statement he jointly issued with Badal and Tohra on the morning of 20 August, only a few hours before his tragic death. But the terrorists were not going to spare him: he was killed because they wanted to physically remove him so that he did not stick on as a thorn in their path.

Akali politics is still in the doldrums and the fate of Punjab is beset with ominous portents. Sant Harchand Singh Longowal's martyrdom to the cause of national unity is certainly inspiring, but it is too early to predict that it would turn the tide against the Akali extremists. What can safely be said about the martyred Sant is that his life ended as the day ends in his native Punjab in the monsoon: in crimson sunset framed by forbidding clouds.

The body of Sant Longowal being taken in a procession to his village, Longowal



Guns and Bullets Rule Once Again

By Inder K. Gujral

Within three weeks of signing, what has been called the historic accord, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal has been martyred for trying to turn the tide of hatred and alienation. Obviously the terrorists, and those who have expressed their happiness over his death, were not participating in the prolonged *dharam yudh* to back up its demands that centred round an assured water supply for the Punjabi farmers nor to get Chandigarh transferred to Punjab not even to secure the release of the innocents from jails or for reinstatement of those army men who had emotionally responded to Operation Bluestar.

The trail of the Sant's blood has now more clearly defined that while a vast majority of the Sikhs—both in the state and outside—are patriotically committed to Indian unity, there are elements and forces whose objectives are to break the nation by violent means.

This is a major turning point in Sikh politics. During the heyday of Bhindranwale, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and his moderate friends were clearly opposed to terrorism and the Khalistan demand, but their voice was dinned out amidst the loud noises of the bombs and bullets. The governmental intransigence and propaganda did everything to make their task formidable. Bluestar, Mrs Gandhi's assassination, the Delhi, Kanpur, Bokaro riots—all put together—built a heavy stone wall between the two fraternal communities and pushed, more or less, the entire Sikh community outside the pale of the nation's mainstream.

Two more factors added to the dark tragedy: Sant Longowal and his leading colleagues were incarcerated when their presence amidst their people was needed most. Even the three successive full benches of the Supreme Court were reluctant to pronounce that his detention was illegal. Obviously even the portals of an institution that normally inspires faith for its neutrality and courage, had been affected by the divisive winds outside. Secondly, one likes to forget it, the December 1984 elec-

tions were conducted as a referendum against the entire Sikh community and a whole arsenal of hate was deployed to mark them out as "enemies of the nation." There are the factions that breed intense alienation and a terroristic psyche. No one stops to raise the query: from where and how successive waves of terrorists are emerging. Only the Sant had asked this both in private and in public. But he did not get any credible response from the powers that be.

Harchand Singh Longowal was neither trusted by the radicalised youth nor by authorities when he was released in the month of March (to digress a little, but let me say, that he was let out of jail) not because the government had changed its attitude but because, though belatedly, the Supreme Court had indicated to the government side that it intended to accept the *habeas corpus* petition.

While the authorities had been accusing the moderates for either coalescing with or succumbing to pressures of the Bhindranwaleites, the Sikh youth blamed them for breaking the solidarity of the Sikhs and for exhibiting cowardice during Operation Bluestar. A lone and distressed Sant was faced with a formidable groundswell. Only a man with the heart of Gandhi could have stood up to raise his voice stressing sanity and basic truths. But humanity has always crucified its prophets of truth; it is not a phenomenon of medieval times.

The three of them, Longowal, Tohra and Badal, had once again closed their ranks hours before his tragic death. They had decided to accommodate and settle with the "United" Akali Dal. A few days earlier Badal had said that it would be a mistake to think that all of those who followed Baba Joginder Singh were extremists. "On the contrary, they are moderates like us."

The announcement of elections severely handicapped Longowal. He had to hurriedly patch up without enunciating and elaborating the principle and the policy frame. Given a few months for intense campaigning, he would have been able to

explain to the rank and particularly the estranged youth that he had been consistent all along and that the agreement was not a "sell-out." The attitude and outlook that had been formed during the long tormenting years could not be wished away by few speeches or TV programmes.

Of course, there are determined, foreign-aided, killers in the terrorist ranks but they prosper in the midst of untrusting minds of the youth. Longowal had still to reach them when his attention was diverted to compulsions of the polls.

I do not plead that the terrorists would not have struck him. They would have attempted to eliminate his sane voice. But elections induced, it seems, an element of urgency.

The policy-makers have made even a more unfortunate decision now. It is an error to believe that the electoral process and its aftermath would isolate extremism. On the contrary, a weakened and divided leadership will be forced to "unify the panth" on a non-Longowal platform. Of course, his martyrdom will be lauded rhetorically and utilised for pulling the votes.

In the face of a new turn in the Akali politics and terroristic threat, the Hindu feeling of insecurity has enhanced. Their polarisation around the Congress(I) is more durable now. As a result, a large mass of the Hindus and the Sikhs are likely to vote on communal lines. Even after the assassination of the Sant it would not have been difficult to establish a credible line of communication with other leading persons in the Akali Dal and work out fresh parities but the imminent polls have inhibited this prospect.

The assassins' bullets and the announcement of election have, together, ended Punjab's brief honeymoon with normalcy. The emerging scenario of factional divisions among the Akalis further dims the hope. An unified Akali leadership, around "Longowalism" is an essential must for inducting an era of peace and stability in the state. But all this needed time for propagation and consolidation which the "early polls" lobby would not grant.

Killers in the Crowd

Sankarshan Thakur describes Sant Longowal's violent end at a meeting in Sangrur

The first shots came from 15 feet away—they failed to find their target. It was nearing 5:30 in the evening and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal had just finished addressing a congregation of 3,500 odd people at the gurdwara in Sherpur, a village in the interior of his home district Sangrur. They were still hailing the Sant's efforts for bringing about Hindu-Sikh amity, seconding it with cheers and waves of the hand when, almost unnoticed, a Sikh youth sitting among the people got up, pulled out a pistol from his kurta and fired. Some heard four shots, some five. Nobody can remember correctly for, at first they did not realise what was happening. Most

thought they were shots from a gun fired in jubilation. It was when they saw blood on the wooden platform where Sant Longowal was sitting that they turned to the man who had pulled the trigger. People ran helter-skelter and the assailant later identified as Gian Singh made for the gurdwara gate. He was caught much before he could make his getaway; a group of villagers seeing that he had thrown away his weapon, chased and grabbed him. As they brought him back, they saw two men—Karamjit Singh and Gurmail Singh—who were on the platform, bleeding. But Santji (as Sant Longowal was referred to) to their relief, was safe. He had risen from his seat in front and had taken a

walk to a spot right behind the makeshift wooden platform. He was slightly shaken but unhurt. They brought him a glass of water and Surinder Singh, Sant Longowal's nephew, asked him how he was. 'I am all right,' he replied. 'There is no reason to worry now. He moved his hands over his body and repeated that he was well. The worst they thought was over. But it was yet to come.

The open bid had failed. It was now the turn of treachery. Even as people around Sant Longowal were heaving a sigh of relief, the second assassin was zeroing in, posing as his bodyguard. *Pate hato pate hato* (move away, move away), he shouted as he made his way through the crowd towards the Sant, flaunting his pistol in the air. *Santji kitthe* (where is Sant Longowal?), He enquired and was promptly shown the way by unsuspecting people. The man also in loose kurta pyjama walked confidently to the squatting Longowal, jammed the butt of his pistol into his stomach and pumped a bullet into him. It went through his liver and later killed him. This time, one of the Sant's cousins, Sher Singh, returned fire, injuring Halwinder Singh, the assailant. But he had done his job. His bullet made its way before anyone around Sant Longowal could provide cover. Two of them did try—and got injured in the process—but they were a second late. The Sant had fallen into his nephew's lap, bleeding profusely. Minutes later, he was on his way to the Sangrur Civil Hospital, 35 km away, accompanied in the ash white Ambassador by Surinder Singh and Sher Singh. The Sant, according to Surinder Singh, was in his senses for most of the way to Sangrur. In fact, he kept asking how far they were from the hospital. He repeatedly asked his nephew to have faith in the Guru and also said that since he had been shot in front of the Darbar Sahib in the Sherpur gurdwara, everything would be all right. But Surinder Singh knew there was no hope much before they reached the hospital.

Sant Longowal seemed to have a special attachment for gurdwara Akal Prakash at Sherpur. He had gone there many times. According to Giani Gurbachan Singh, the chief priest of the Sherpur gurdwara,



Sant Longowal addressing one of his last meetings in a village in Sangrur district

Sankarshan Thakur

'Without Longowal, it Now Seems an Uphill Task'

Punjab Governor Arjun Singh told SUNDAY

Q: Was Jeet Singh, the main security guard of Sant Longowal, a close associate of Simranjeet Singh Mann?

A: Yes. I have asked ex-general Gauri Shankar to look into this detail.

Q: When did you come to know of his association?

A: I came to know only after the murder of Sant Longowal?

Q: Are Longowal's 15 security guards under arrest or at least under surveillance?

A: Nothing of that sort. They have neither been arrested nor are they under surveillance. We will take action only if something is established against them.

Q: Who do you think is behind Sant Longowal's murder? Was it a political murder or a case of terrorist activity?

A: Well, it's not proper for me to comment on this especially since the CBI inquiry is going on. But I do feel that it was a deep conspiracy against him. We will go to the bottom of it and see to it that the guilty are punished.

Q: What arrangements have you made for holding safe elections?



Arjun Singh: optimistic

A: The standard arrangements—like arrangements for the security of the polling officers and others concerned. (We have made) arrangements to ensure that the backward classes vote fearlessly. However, given the present circumstances, I do feel that we would

need extra security arrangements for the safety of the general public. So we will take the help of all forces.

Q: You mean that the army will help to hold these elections?

A: No, not the army. But we will take the help of paramilitary forces. We will augment the number of securitymen to ensure that no one takes the law into his hands. All efforts will be made to ensure peaceful elections.

Q: Don't you think that the postponement of elections by a mere three days was rather...?

A: This was no postponement. But we wanted to give time to the Akalis for the cremation of Sant Longowal.

Q: Will you find it difficult to implement the accord without the support of Longowal?

A: (That is) true. Without Longowal, it now seems an uphill task. But I have great faith in mass support. The people of Punjab are behind this settlement. So I am hopeful of the implementation to come through.

Interviewed by Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

"Whenever Santji found time, he would come and spend it with us." He was to have gone to the gurdwara convention of the Istri Akali Dal on 6 August but due to rain-floods, Sherpur had been cut off. The meeting had then been postponed to 20 August. The Sant did reach Sherpur, but it was his last visit. A day after the killer bullets had punctured peace in Sherpur, the pandal erected for the meeting on 20 August still stands empty, in the large open courtyard. On the wooden platform and a spot right behind it are marked two large circles, one where Sant Longowal escaped death and the second where it cornered him.

A group of villagers are always around and the events of 20 August are gone over again and again. The words are the same: the tragedy could have been avoided if only the securitymen had done their job well. The *bandobast* for the meeting, according to the people in the gurdwara, was impressive. Other than the personal securitymen of Sant Longowal, there were contingents of the Punjab police and the Central Re-

serve Police Force (CRPF) accompanying the entourage. Even the commandos had taken position on the rooftops of the houses that overlook gurdwara Akal Prakash. In fact, some of them were even atop the minaret above the main gate of the gurdwara. "But," said Harbans Singh, a village youth who was fanning Sant Longowal seconds before the fatal shooting, "none of them could do anything when the killers struck." The policemen were sprawled out on the lawns behind the pandal. They did not move in after the first round of firing by Gian Singh had taken place. Had they formed a ring around Sant Longowal immediately after the first attempt, the story could have been different. They did not. And even before the ink could dry on the Gandhi-Longowal pact, the killers had soaked it in blood.

It was not totally unexpected though. Sant Longowal's peace initiatives with New Delhi, which had resulted in the agreement had frustrated the efforts of all those who had worked to keep Punjab—and the

country—destabilised. The Sant was, perhaps on the top of the hitlist of hardcore terrorists. Several groups, including the "United" Akali Dal of Baba Joginder Singh and the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) had openly branded Sant Longowal as a "traitor," describing the Punjab accord as a "sellout." They had warned that they would not allow peace in Punjab. "We shall see how elections are held in Punjab," an AISSF activist had told this correspondent in Amritsar's Golden Temple immediately after the settlement between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal.

There was spontaneous rejoicing in the offices of the "United" Akali Dal and the AISSF as soon as the news about the attempt on the life of Sant Longowal reached the Golden Temple complex. An Amritsar-based journalist who was present in the Golden Temple complex on the evening of 20 August and who wished to remain anonymous, told SUNDAY: "I saw volunteers of the AISSF and supporters of Baba Joginder Singh dancing with joy as they learnt of the

attempt on the life of the Akali Dal chief." (However, J.S. Talwandi in a press report denied that there was rejoicing over the murder of Sant Longowal.)

They were all there at the Sangrur Civil Hospital by late evening. Woeful, tense faces. The Punjab governor Arjun Singh with his aides, senior Akali leaders including Prakash Singh Badal, Surjit Singh Barnala, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Balwant Singh and thousands of supporters of the Sant who waited outside for a word of hope from the doctors. Later in the night the union home minister, S.B. Chavan and the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary arrived from New Delhi. Meanwhile, the doctors inside were doing their level best to revive the sinking Sant, at least to keep him going till the special teams of surgeons from the Post Graduate Institute (PGI) in Chandigarh and New Delhi reached Sangrur. But such was Longowal's

condition that the experts did not even get a chance to treat him. He was dead before they arrived. Indeed, one of the senior doctors at the Sangrur Civil Hospital who was present when Longowal was brought in, said that the Sant was dead sometime after his arrival, much before the officially announced time of 8:40 pm. So profusely had he bled on his way that an operation to extricate the bullet in the abdomen could not be undertaken. Instead, the Sangrur hospital medical team comprising Dr Harnek Singh, Dr R.K. Goel, Dr S.K. Goel and Dr H.C. Loomba, tried to keep him alive by administering cardiac massages. They did not have to do it for long.

Gloom descended on Sangrur as soon as the final word came. Along with it came a palpable tension. Perhaps, more than the tragic happenings of the day, it was the future that worried those who were present. Suddenly, what seemed to look more and more like a straight path to

peace had coiled to form a big question mark. Harchand Singh Longowal was the cornerstone of the edifice of peace that was being built. Would the structure hold even after his fall? The Akali Dal was faced with a crisis. Was there someone in their ranks who could step into Sant Longowal's shoes? Was there even a man who would be acceptable to all? Or, would the fractious "Dal" split open into bitter factions again?

What of the centre? Hardly 27 days had passed and one end of the bridge they had built in Punjab had collapsed. A single gunshot seemed to have put the clock back. In a state that was preparing to go to the polls, the police was immediately placed on red alert and the army and paramilitary forces asked to stand by. Tension had shot back. It was, perhaps, an indication of the future that those who held the reins of the country left all else to attend to the new situation in Punjab after Sant Longowal's assassination. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi summoned an emergency meeting of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of the union cabinet to discuss the post-Longowal scenario in Punjab. It was a session which dragged on till late in the night and was based on a series of "situation reports" which had been despatched from Arjun Singh's office in Chandigarh. Later, the union home minister S.B. Chavan and the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary, Arun Singh, returned with their own assessments after talks with top officials and leading political personalities of the state. So did the Punjab Governor, Arjun Singh, whose advice about the state carries weight with the Prime Minister. Arjun Singh had played a key role in the fruition of the Punjab accord between the Prime Minister and Sant Longowal. With his network of contacts that Arjun Singh had established during his tenure as Governor, he is considered one of the best men to advise the centre on its Punjab policy.

There were two main issues facing the government. The obvious one, of course, was whether or not to go ahead with elections in Punjab but equally important, perhaps, was the question of a replacement for Sant Longowal. Anything would be impossible for the centre to do in Punjab without a sane voice at the head of the Akali Dal, the popular party in the state. Who could the centre depend upon? Delhi had subtly and assiduously helped enhance the status and credibility of Sant Longowal over the months. The gamble had paid off; the Sant had become the

The Suicide Mission

Jarnail Singh, Gian Singh, Halwinder Singh, Nirmal Singh, Darshan Singh and Charanjit Singh, the six men allegedly involved in the assassination of Sant Longowal are all educated and below the age of 30. Four of them were taken into custody within a couple of days of the assassination while Jarnail Singh and Charanjit Singh were absconding. Whereas Gian Singh and Halwinder Singh, the two who had fired at Longowal in the Sherpur gurdwara, were apprehended immediately by the people there, Nirmal Singh and Darshan Singh were picked up by the Punjab Police at Sudhar in Ludhiana district. They all belonged to the same area—Ludhiana—but not all of them were known terrorists. Jarnail Singh, in fact, was the only one who had a criminal record and was wanted by the Punjab Police in several cases. It was he who persuaded Gian Singh and Halwinder Singh to carry out the assassination and took them to the Sherpur Gurdwara on his motorcycle sometime before Sant Longowal reached there. Again it was Jarnail Singh who had procured the weapons for Gian and Halwinder Singh which were of foreign make and since the two were not trained in their use, Jarnail Singh took them to a village field and "taught them the basic techniques."

It is perhaps for the first time in a major terrorist operation in Punjab that the assailants have been caught on the scene of the incident. The *modus operandi* for the assassination of Sant Longowal was markedly different from the ones the terrorists adopted in earlier cases. This was not a hit and run operation and there were no vehicles waiting in readiness for the assailants to escape. By undertaking this mission, the extremists have shown how determined they are, even if it meant launching what was almost a suicide mission. Besides, the fact that even amateurs could be persuaded to execute such a job is an indication of the efforts the terrorist group is making to broaden its activities.

During the initial interrogation there was a confirmation of sorts from Gian Singh that the extremists had played upon his emotions and forced him into killing Sant Longowal. He admitted that he was "terribly upset" over Operation Bluestar and that the men who had contacted him for the job had taken advantage of this. "*Galti ho gai* (it was a mistake)," he is supposed to have told his interrogators. Meanwhile, Halwinder Singh, the other alleged assassin lay injured under heavy guard at the Rajendra Hospital in Patiala.

Sant Longowal's Thakur, Chandigarh

strongest and the most influential voice in Punjab. Now that he was no more, who should the centre negotiate with in the Akali camp? Surely, it could not protect peace single-handedly, it needed a partner in the Akali Dal. Late on the evening of 22 August, the government settled the first issue. Despite opposition from all non-Congress(I) national parties and dissenting voices in the Akali Dal, Assembly and parliamentary elections were to go ahead in Punjab. The date of the poll had been extended from 22 September to 25 September but that seemed more a technical change than anything else. The second issue was more vexed. The confusion in the Akali Dal arising from the sudden departure of Sant Longowal had become a major political stumbling block. The fight for leadership, though suppressed till the funeral of the slain leader on 21 August, came out in the open as the Akali leaders split away to their respective camps after having paid their last respects to Santji at his native village, Longowal.

The Kamuwal gurdwara is at the edge of Longowal village in the midst of lush green paddy fields. Sant Longowal had taken a keen interest in the construction of the gurdwara but hardly anyone could guess that even before it was completed, his body would be lying on a pyre in its courtyard. Thousands had turned out on the day of the funeral to bid good-bye to the Sant. Men, women and children of all faiths had converged from near and far in trucks and tractors, buses and vans, jeeps and motorcycles. Thousands from neighbouring villages and towns had crisscrossed the expanse of green for miles to reach in time for the last rites. For miles on either side of the gurdwara one could see streams of people. The funeral procession, which had started from Sangrur early in the morning, had itself brought along thousands of people. Sant Longowal's body, bedecked with flowers and draped in an off-white shawl, was brought atop an open Matador truck on which stood the Akali leader's trusted aide, Surjit Singh Barnala, Sant Longowal's sister Bibi Dileep Kaur and ironically the martyred leader's tall, strapping personal bodyguard who was not with him at Sherpur on that fateful day. He was taken ill the day before.

A separate group of leaders had been sent out by the centre for the funeral. Defence minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, union minister of state for power, Arun Nehru, the Lok Sabha speaker, Balaram Jakhar and two AICC(I) general secretaries G.K.



Giani Sahib Singh and Kirpal Singh with others performing the last rites of Sant Longowal

Moopanar and Rajendra Kumari Bapat. Representing President Zail Singh was his military secretary Air Marshal R.S. Naidu. There were Akali and Sikh religious leaders too led by Giani Sahib Singh, the chief priest of the Golden Temple. The security personnel stood in line, heads bowed as a mark of respect; the guns boomed in salute; the people prayed for the Sant's soul. Nara Singh, a native of Longowal who claimed to have known him for several years, said, "What an irony! The man who had fought against violence had himself become its victim."

The internecine tussle in the Akali Dal surfaced on the funeral ground itself. The pyre of Sant Longowal was still burning and his sister still wailing in one of the rooms of the gurdwara, when some of the *jathedars* of the Akali Dal closeted themselves to begin discussions on their future course of action. The rift was immediately visible for while Surjit Singh Barnala and his men stayed back, the former Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) president, Gurmehar Singh Tohra, the two Akali protagonists who had opposed the Punjab accord, sped away to Chandigarh in the same car. During the few minutes in which this correspondent could talk to them, both expressed their views against the holding of elections in Punjab immediately. Both were uncertain about the future of Akali politics and Punjab. "It is too early to say," remarked Badal, as his car moved out of the gurdwara, "things have suddenly changed with Santji's death. Tohra sitting beside

him said, "Wait and watch, we are still in the Akali Dal."

Only hours before his assassination, Sant Longowal had made a major breakthrough in Akali politics by bringing both Badal and Tohra under his umbrella. At a hurriedly summoned press conference around noon on 20 August in Chandigarh, Sant Longowal had announced that there were no differences between him and the two Akali leaders who had hitherto been opposing the accord. Speaking in the name of 'Panthic unity', he said he had entrusted the task of achieving unity to the two "senior leaders" of the party. Badal and Tohra too told the press that there was no misunderstanding and that the Akali Dal would always remain united. The announcement of the Punjab polls had brought the two estranged groups together. But even otherwise, say political observers in Punjab, the coming together of the two groups was only a matter of time. If not Tohra, at least Badal would have come around because it was a question of his career: opposing the popular Sant Longowal would have meant political isolation. Just before the press conference in Chandigarh, Longowal met Badal and Tohra at the house of a common friend near Patiala and their differences were thrashed out. Badal and Tohra had asked albeit hesitatingly for assurances about the Barnala-Balwant Singh group in the Akali Dal. The Sant must have given them a satisfactory reply. But then, by that evening, Longowal was dead and the sanctity of the agreement with Badal and Tohra remained no more. Without the arbiter around the squabbles began afresh.

Barnala: A Pragmatic Choice

The war of succession within the Akali Dal started even before the cremation of Sant Longowal. At a gathering of mourners in Kambowal gurdwara in Sangrur district, an emergency meeting of 19 jathedars was announced. The jathedars decided on a possible successor to Sant Longowal from among two names: S.S. Barnala and Ajit Singh. When the names were put to vote, Barnala won by 12 out of the 19

votes. And even as AIR was announcing Barnala's name as the convenor of the Akali Dal, three jathedars owing allegiance to the Prakash Singh Badal camp contested the claim saying that it was not Barnala who had been elected as convenor but Ajit Singh. They even gave out the number of votes Ajit Singh had won: 14 out of 19 votes. The jathedars also said that the announcement of Barnala

as convenor of the Akali Dal was "fabricated and baseless."

The haste with which the leadership among the Akalis acted has brought the intra-party squabbles into the open. Badal, who had been kept to the sidelines by Longowal when he was building up Barnala and Balwant Singh, has now received a fresh lease of life. It may be pointed out that he had opposed the accord. In fact, he had no other option open. Longowal had gone to Delhi to sign the accord without Badal at his side, although Badal was the leader of the opposition Akali Party in the state. In fact, the Badal camp had been feeling left out for quite some time because an impression was gaining ground that Barnala was being groomed by Longowal as the future leader of the Akali Dal.

This was unacceptable to the supporters of Badal. But Longowal's sudden rise as a national figure put a stop to Badal's plans. In fact, he found he had no authority to assert himself. The same was the case with Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the president of the SGPC. Tohra, who held a high position in Sikh religio-politics, had to eat humble pie while Sant Longowal was given prominence by Delhi. Although both Badal and Tohra accepted Longowal's supremacy—albeit grudgingly—they were biding their time to assert themselves.

It was at this juncture that Longowal was assassinated. His death has once again opened the doors for Badal and Tohra to rise again. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the initial noises to Barnala's installation as the acting president were made by those close to Badal.

Tohra, on the other hand, does not want to take part directly in the struggle within the Akali Dal. There is a reason. Tohra cannot go back on his own word because he said he did not want to seek re-election as the president of the SGPC, nor contest parliamentary or Assembly elections. It was but natural of him, therefore, to support the candidature of Sant Ajit Singh. But future events proved that the choice of Surjit Singh Barnala was perhaps the most pragmatic. For, today Barnala is the most respected among the Akalis and it is he, more than anyone else, who can implement the accord fully with help from the government.

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

"I Shall Spare No Effort for the Implementation of the Accord"

Acting president of the Akali Dal,
Surjit Singh Barnala, told SUNDAY

Q: As acting president of the Akali Dal, what are your future plans?

A: Well, my most precious dream is to pursue the policies of Sant Longowal as faithfully as possible. His aim was to bring about peace and "general amity" and I shall follow his path of restoration of the glory of the *panth* which was most dear to Santji and he worked relentlessly for it. Although I cannot hope to work for it at Santji's pace but still I shall do my best in this direction. Last but not the least, Santji, before he fell to the bullets, was wholeheartedly working for the implementation of the Punjab centre accord. I too feel very strongly for the accord and I shall spare no effort for the implementation of the accord.

Q: What do you mean by working for the implementation of the accord?

A: I mean that I shall try to see that the accord is implemented as fast as possible. In the process if we find some snags those should be removed amicably. I wish to see all the 11 points in the accord being implemented. The release of the Sikh youth and a proper and reasonable settlement of the army deserters should come through as early as possible.

Q: Will the Akali Dal contest the elections?

A: Yes, I will fight the elections. Although we wanted elections to be adjourned... since the centre has decided to hold them we are left

with no alternative but to contest.

Q: Will you have seat adjustments with other opposition parties?

A: I think it is too early comment on this.

Q: Will you like the merger of the "United" Akali Dal with the Akali Dal in view of the coming elections?

A: Yes, we will make an effort for the merger, for panthic unity, which was Santji's ultimate dream. Thus, my priority will be to bring about unity among the two Dals.

Q: As the acting president, what do you think of Badal and Tohra's dissent over the Punjab accord?

A: Well, they do not disagree any more and they have understood the accord in the overall interest of Punjab which was always expected of them. In the meeting held today (25 August), one of the resolutions has already declared full support to the accord by all those present including Badal and Tohra.

Q: How do you propose to work on the fast implementation of the accord?

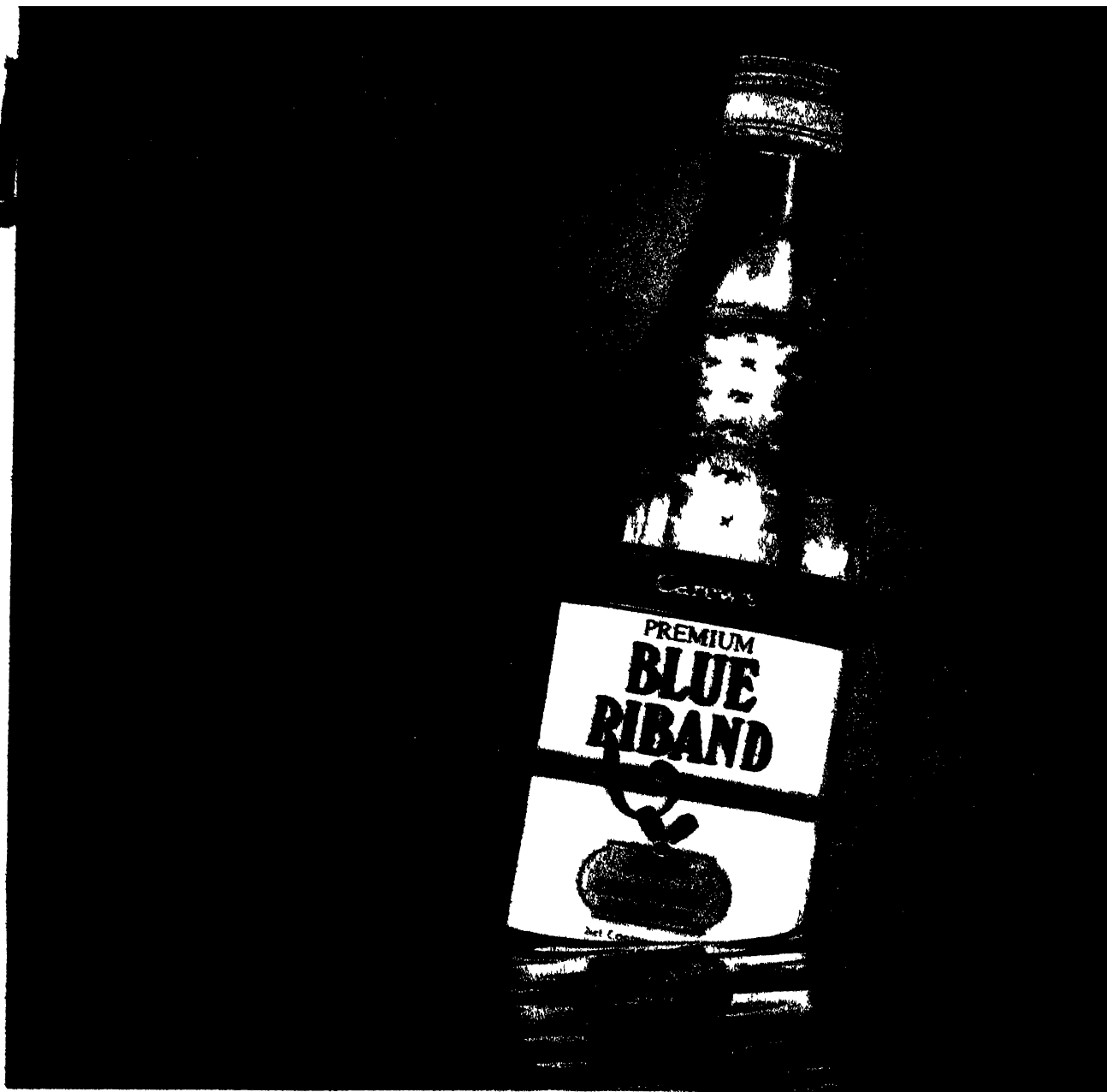
A: Well, I shall seek the cooperation of the centre and we have already asked for it in a resolution in the meeting of 25 August.

Q: Would you like to bring some changes in the Akali Dal?

A: It has to remain religious-political in structure.

Q: If there is a coalition with the Congress(I), will you accept it?

A: There can be no question of a coalition with the Congress(I).



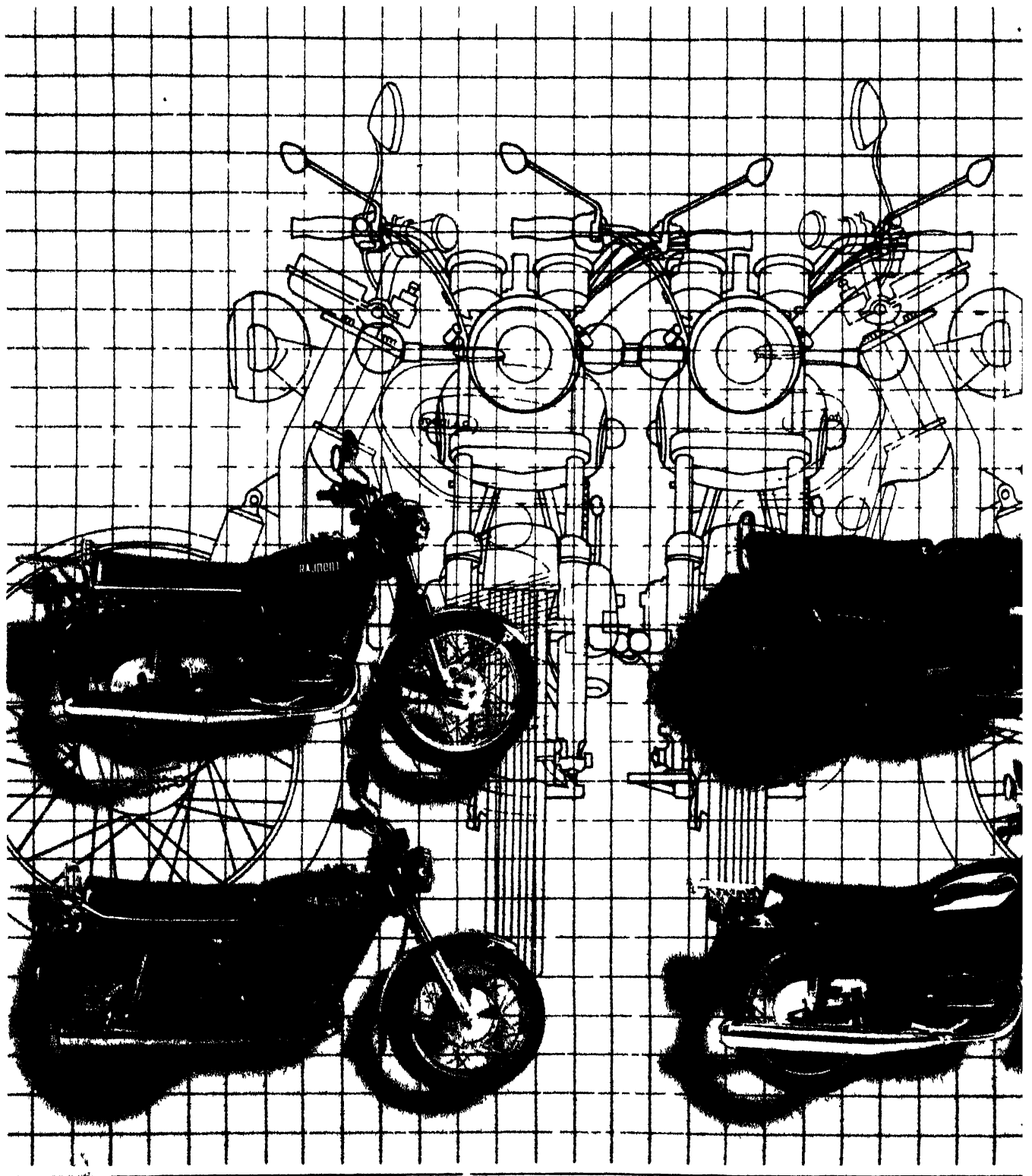
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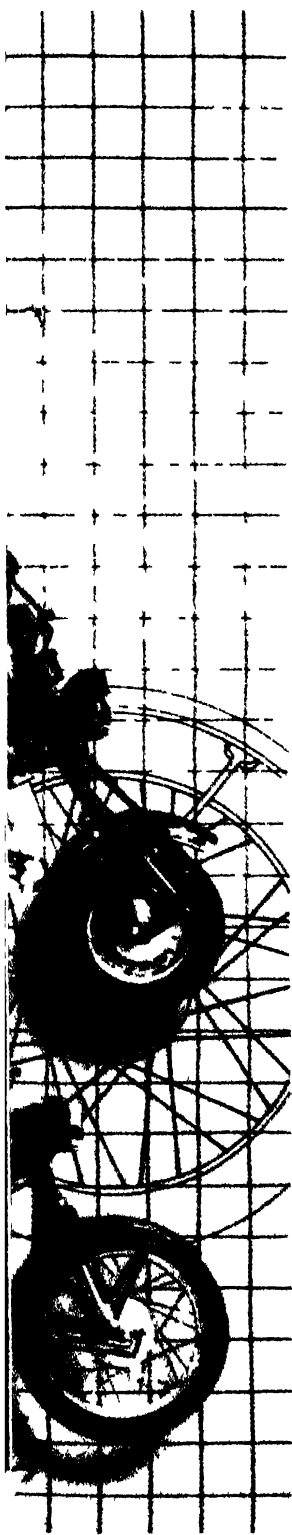
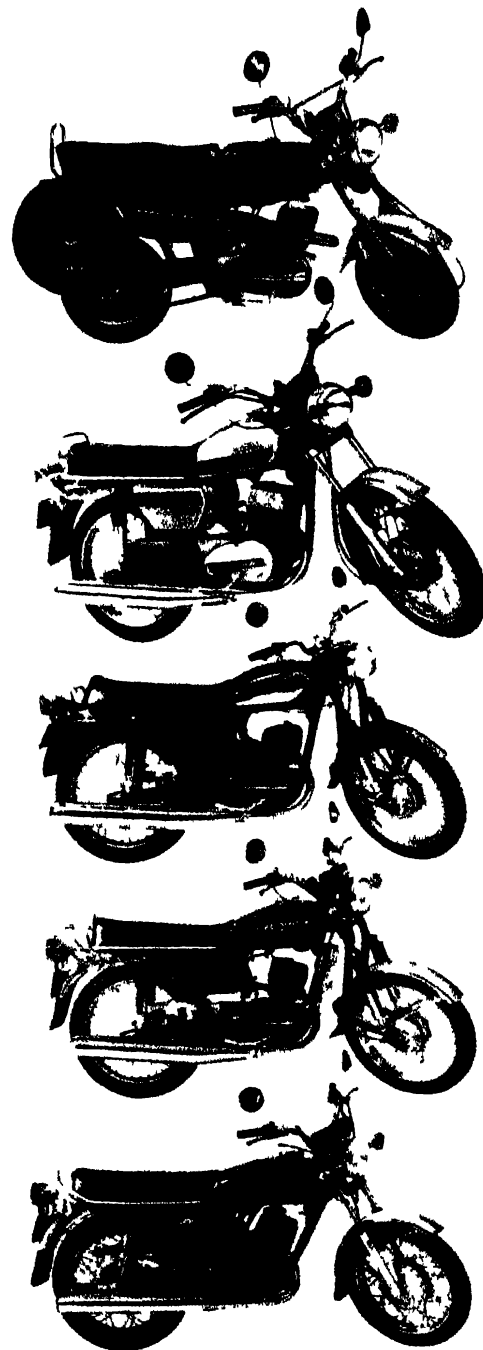
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WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LEADER

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Fallen Star

Prem Nazir, who dominated Malayalam cinema for decades and was said to be joining politics, is now a has-been after acting in more than 600 films, with more roles to his credit than perhaps any actor in the world, he is an unhappy man *Binoo K. John reports*



Prem Nazir: a write-off

V Satyamurthy

There was a halo of permanence about Prem Nazir. While on the silver screens around the world, beauties, boys and beasts created their own little histories and zipped out into oblivion, one man in the south of India strode the screen, an ever young hero, mocking at time. For over 35 years and nearly 600 films, after he first appeared in films like *Marumakal* in 1952, Prem Nazir's presence was an inevitable factor in Malayalam cinema. In the world of cinema there have been greater actors, but none who were so consistent or prolific.

But suddenly time, it seems, has conquered Prem Nazir. The man who averaged 18 films a year, has acted in only five films this year and that too in concert with other new stars. He has not had a hit film for a long time. Instead there has been a string of flops. For a man who ruled Malayalam cinema like a monarch, the last stage was ignominious. Many distributors in Kerala insisted that his picture should not be printed on posters, lest it keep people away. Producers who put their money on him are now trying to wriggle out. Others are trying to salvage half-hot films by putting in new stars. Mammuty, Motanlal, Rehma or Sankar. The man whose face stared from every nook and corner of the state is no longer there. The best he can hope for is small roles. Prem Nazir, the ever-green hero, the eternal Romeo, the man who has acted in the most number of films in the world, will soon pass on to the pages of cinema history.

The images of a lifetime, however, remain. The idiot Velayudhan in *Eru tinthe Atmayu* (The soul of darkness), Ramu in *Thulabharam* (Balance), dumb man Raghavan in *Adimakal* (Slaves), as Udayan, Thamuran in *Padavottam* as Thacholi Ambu in the film of the same name and hundreds of romantic heroes.

No recognised award—national or state level—has come the way of this man. But Prem Nazir did not bother about being given awards and certificates in front of an applauding audience. For him recognition was the audience that thronged to see him year after year for over three decades.

How then did Prem manage to keep going film after film? How could filmgoers of a state keep looking at the same face, same expression, same type of movement year after year? Says director P. Bhaskaran who has directed Nazir in a number of films: "He was an exemplary actor. He could play certain types of heroes better than anyone else, espe-



Prem Nazir and Latha, the eternal Romeo

cially that of a simpleton or imbecile like in my *Eru tinthe Atmayu*. Moreover, he had good looks.

But there are many others who feel his face is not suited for the screen. Said a noted cinematographer: "All this talk of handsome face is rubbish."

What endeared Prem Nazir to many producers in the Sixties and Seventies was his professional approach and disciplined lifestyle. Once he gave the date he reached the location despite all odds and did what the director ordered.

Malayalam cinema drew its lifeblood from theatre. Early films were theatrical in sequences and movement. Hence the predominance of dialogues. That is where Prem Nazir scored with his style of speech. Be it oratory, be it the desperate pleadings at a damsel's feet, be it the angry man shouting at social injustice, Nazir was always on terra firma. When producers saw that any film

with Prem Nazir as lover boy would draw out a good crowd, especially women, they started signing him up. That proved to be Nazir's undoing. He could not extricate himself out of the groove of the wig and leather belt-clad hero. Says P. Bhaskaran, a song writer and also chairman of the Kerala Film Development Corporation: "He got into stereotyped roles. Many directors did not know how to get the best out of him."

The richest segment of his career is, however, his characterisation of mythological heroes. From Kerala's popular ballads of Malabar (*Vadakan Pattu*) filmmakers like Kunchacko and Appachan, owners of the famed Udaya Studio, made utmost use of Nazir's acting acumen by casting him in film versions of ballads like *Aromalluni*, *Thacholi Ambu* and the first Malayalam 70 mm spectacular *Padavottam* and *Tacholi Marumakan Chandu*.

Padayottam was the watershed in Nazir's career that spanned three generations, not just in terms of it being a 70mm-seven track stereophonic extravaganza but that it included a number of actors from veterans Thikurussi, Sukumaran Nair, Madhu, Govindankutty to the emerging phalanx of young actors like Mammatty, Mohanlal and Sankar. *Padayottam* which had elements of *Vadakan Patu* coloured with the heroics of a Count of Monte Cristo, was one of the sincere efforts Malayalam cinema made to shrug off its past. Through *Padayottam*, the audience got a peek into the future of Malayalam cinema itself. Prem Nazir surpassed himself as Udayan Namboodiri who is cheated off his sweetheart and powers by his brother, caught by slaves and then returns two decades later to avenge himself.

But after *Padayottam*, Nazir's career graph plummeted earthward. There were occasional glimpses of brilliance, but nothing to put a stop to the burgeoning careers of Mammatty or Mohanlal. The mantle had already fallen on new young shoulders.

With Sheela, Prem Nazir formed nature's pair. In nearly 100 films (perhaps, another world record) Nazir and Sheela were locked together.

When Sheela faded, beckoned by time, Jayabharathi came. She too lasted over 50 films opposite Nazir before she was replaced by Sharada who belonged to a "heavenly breed" of heroines. It was Sharada who could sometimes push Nazir out of the limelight when acting together. But Sharada too merged into the past while Nazir braved the storm.

Prem Nazir, inherited the throne from Satyan. Satyan was constantly setting new standards for lesser actors to emulate. Both in *Adimakal* and *Anubhavangal Palichakal*, Nazir was pitted against Satyan and emerged badly bruised. Satyan was in the same category as a Dilip Kumar. Nazir realised early in his career that Satyan's position was beyond his reach. But Nazir survived and thrived when Satyan, Sheela, Jayabharathi and the others withered, felled by nature's cruel blows.

"He had a pleasing personality and tremendous patience. He had his share of good roles. Running around trees was an exception, not the rule with Nazir. The fact remains that he was not properly utilised," said Madhu who has acted in over 60 films with Nazir. "His professionalism is another factor. He went out of his way to help producers and even directors." Many people in the film



Nazir and Jayabharathi: long partnership

industry share Madhu's assessment of Nazir's success: pleasing manners, perseverance, patience and professionalism.

But beneath this facade there lurked a shrewd manipulator and a great survivor who could see a challenge in the horizon. He knew how to checkmate the challenge. In the Sixties and Seventies it was the distributor-director-actor clique (for instance the Vimala Releasing Co comprising director Sasikumar and Prem Nazir) that controlled Malayalam filmdom.

If he sensed that a newcomer had enough potential, Nazir rode piggyback on him. One instance was the macho man Jayan, whose face was covered with a dare-devil look and his body with rippling muscles. After years of looking at a soft mild hero, Jayan came as a welcome change. Nazir took him on encouraged him, recommended him to various producers and of course managed to wrangle roles opposite him. Jayan, of course, was eternally grateful to Nazir for his help. Many such films like *Love in Singapore* and *Nayattu* (remake of *Zanjeer*) became hits. Nazir shared the limelight. Only after Jayan died in a helicopter crash while shooting, did producers realise that people had thronged to see Jayan. Immediately many Jayan-imitators sprouted and faded like mushrooms. But Nazir continued his ride in triumph.

Usually Nazir signed films without hearing the story. He would report for work on time and till about four or five days of shooting, would not even show any interest in the script or the development of the story. Around the fifth day he would start dropping hints about slight changes in the script to benefit his role. The director and producer out of respect to the Czar of cinema, would oblige and soon it would be Nazir staring from almost every frame in the film. One filmmaker realised this tactic of Nazir and countered it successfully. He booked Nazir for ten days and finished off Nazir's part in a swift five-day shooting schedule. After that he did not even bother to call

Nazir as a priest in *Madhuvidhu Thirumumbhe*





Prem Nazir with co-actress Sri Vidya

Nazir with Sumitra, the evergreen hero



Nazir to the location. Later, however, some of the unit members got anonymous threatening letters from the Nazir Fans' Association.

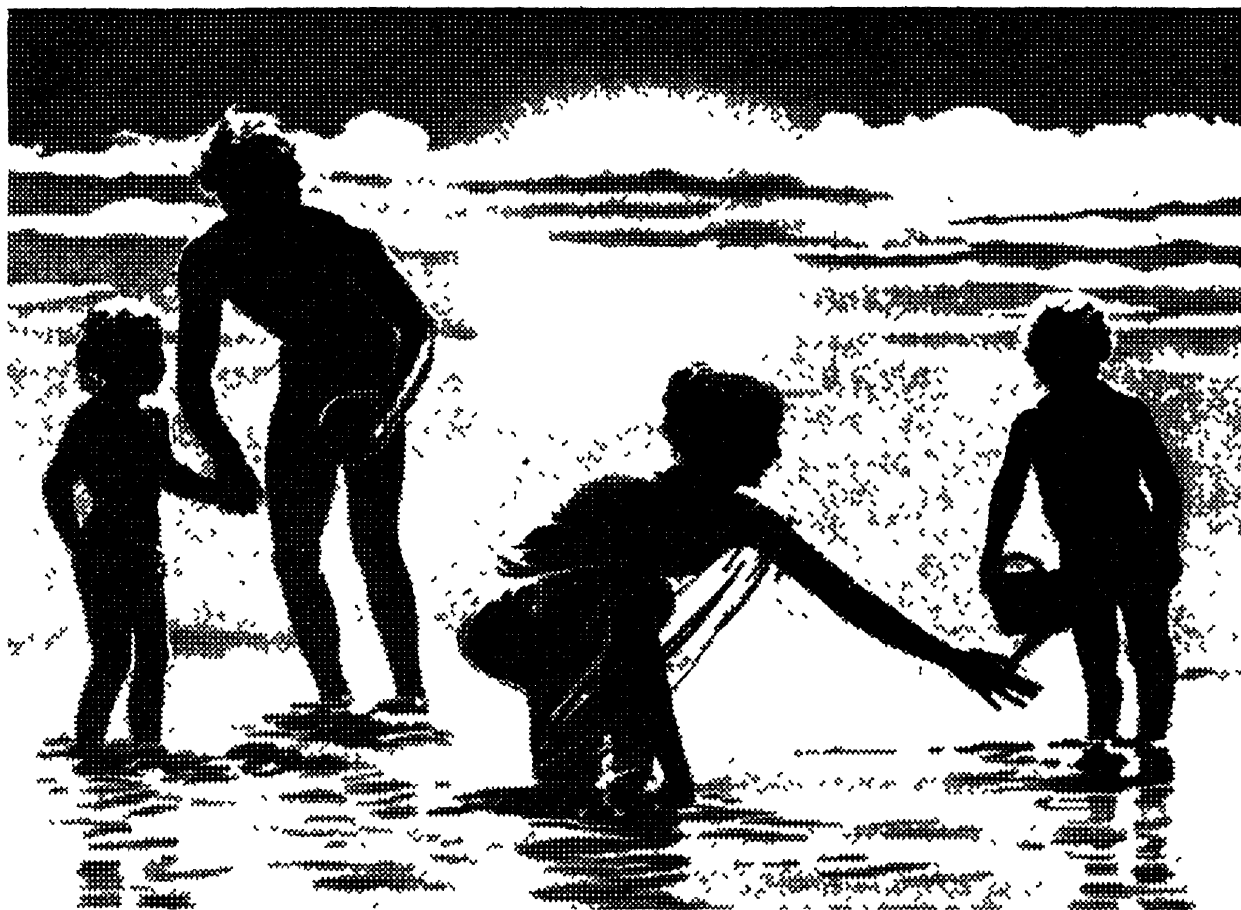
It was perhaps apt that cinema itself foretold the impending crisis of Nazir. Young director Lenin Rajendran made a film about Prem Nazir in 1983 titled *Prem Nazirum Kaima Nilu* (Prem Nazir is missing). The film was about Prem Nazir being kidnapped from a film set by a gang demanding ransom. Suddenly there was a void in the filmworld. The intention was to gauge the reaction of the populace to a situation without Nazir. Nobody turned up at the theatres. Said up and coming actor-director and much sought after poster designer S. Rajendran. The producers asked me to make a poster of this film with Nazir all alone. He felt that the man who would bring in the money. He could not even touch the poster. It was then that I realised that Prem Nazir's magic had worn off.

Around the same time on film *Oru Flashback* (A Flashback) was made for K.G. George. It was about the mysterious death of actor and the events that led to it. Nazir was shown in the smooth operator keeping happy. Ironically it is M. Jayaram who acted the role of Nazir. If Mammukutty had directed the spirit of Nazir and he had.

Last month two films with Nazir were being shown in them *Oru Kadu* (The Kadu) and *Madhu* (Madhu). I instructed that Nazir should not be on the poster. The Nazir Fans' Association, which had been formed by Nazir himself, had led out many of the film posters. A protest against Nazir. Finally, bowing down to pressure, another poster with Nazir was printed before the film was released. The other film with Nazir in the officer was ironically titled *Oru thazhuvu* (Resurrection).

When Abdul Khader from a village near Trivandrum, who was a shylock in his college profession at Chengannacherry, few saw that Shylock the future Prem Nazir would have an octopus-like era. Malavalam filmdom for more than three decades. Today at 41, Prem Nazir is very near the exit of filmdom through which greater actors have passed into oblivion. He still has that rare talent to come up with a gripping last performance. But his exit leaves no void.

Bino K. John, Trivandrum



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"Politics is Not for a Gentleman Like Me"

Prem Nazhi told SUNDAY

Q: How did you get into films?
A: I never wanted to. In college I used to act in plays. I have acted a lot in Shakespeare plays. In S.B. College I was known as "Shylock Khader." I was in charge of organising plays as the Arts Club secretary. Then I got a best actor award. Actually my ambition was to become an advocate. After my intermediate exams I went to my (native) place Chirayinkul for a vacation. My friends there forced me to go for an acting competition organised by the Dramatic Bureau at the UJI Hall in Trivandrum. I was not very keen. Finally I agreed. There were about 40 college students competing. Each was allotted nine minutes: three minutes for *rowdram*, three minutes for *hasyam* and three minutes for *shokam*. For *shokam* I enacted the scene of Maharaja Harishchandra leaving his palace, addressing the audience. For *rowdram* I enacted the scene of a betrayed lover. For *hasyam* (comedy) I imitated the famous comedian S. P. Pillai. That was how Abdul Khader got first prize. One of the judges the late Parameswara Pillai asked me whether I was interested in acting in a film. He told me that somebody called Satyan was acting in the movie called *Thyagaseema* and they wanted one more actor. He immediately gave me a letter addressed to the director K.M.K. Menon and I went rather reluctantly. That was how I first faced the camera.

Q: Did the roles start coming straight away?

A: No, I joined the Trivandrum University College for my degree course. Then came this offer from Salem for a film called *Marumakal*. I was very reluctant. Finally I asked my wife. I married at the age of 19. Then I went. The director was Chari and my heroine was Neyyabukara Komalam. By the time I reached they had already shot about 4,000 feet. I acted my role very confidently. After one week in Salem I felt homesick.

Q: Were you an ardent filmgoer before entering films?

A: Yes. Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor were my heroes. Hindi films were a

big craze then.

Q: Don't you think you made your mark in mythological films?

A: The first mythological film I acted in was *Sita*. The heroine was Kurla Kumari. She was Sita. I was Sri Ram. That was a hit. It was after this that Udaya went in to *Vadakan Pattu* (ballads) films. Then they took a series of such films like *Naradam*, all of which became hits. All except *Bhakta Kuchela* were hit. But they didn't lose much money.

Q: Sheela and you made a great pair.

A: You know we acted in about



Prem Nazhi

110 films together. We had perfect understanding, she had a very decent behaviour and was extremely talented. And what a beauty she was. Like a statue! (Tracing an hour glass outline with his hands). It was just Nazir Sheela, Nazir Sheela!

Q: Jayabharathi.

A: Then Jayabharathi came along. She was an emotional person. Whatever she wanted to say she said.

Q: Today if you were asked to pick one from among them as your heroine whom would you choose?

A: Both. Sheela would be a better

character actress.

Q: What do you think about the quality of films today?

A: There are too many films today. In the Sixties and Seventies we filmed good stories. Now everybody wants to make money. There is no point in blaming the artistes. The old generation has gone and a new one has emerged. The new filmmakers are all intelligent and from good families.

Q: Why did you attack artists?

A: Oh those were the days. Now they have also changed. They are making good films. Even N. Gopalakrishnan made good films now. There are good films. The early days they did not know much about film. That's why I attacked them.

Q: Producers now are opening for Mammootty and others.

A: That is their type of roles. There are other roles meant for me and Madhu. Now I selectively roles that suit me. I want to be an advocate or politician. There is to be a time when I can use my histrionic talent. I can tell my name to give me roles. But.

Q: What about your political ambitions?

A: I am still vacillating. Some people told me that it is not a field suited for a gentleman like me.

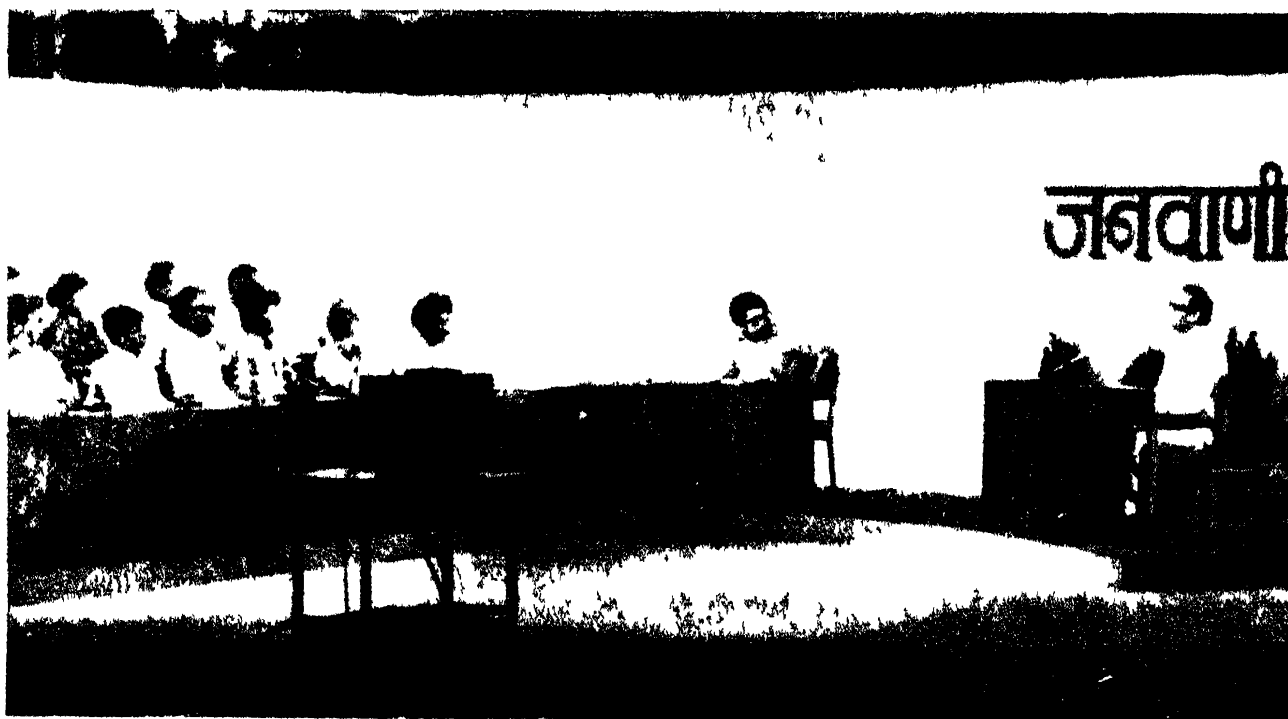
Q: What are your future plans?

A: Now that I don't have much films to act in I get enough time to do a lot of other things I can attend to my business interests. I have invested in companies. Now I am going to travel around the world. Seeing the world has been my childhood dream. The first lap of the tour is over. I visited the Far East, now I am going to Europe.

Q: Looking back what do you feel?

A: I am happy and contented. I thank God I have achieved so much. I have helped a lot of people. There are no orphanages in Kerala which have not received money from me. I have even given an elephant to a temple in my own town. The old order changeth giving way to the new.

Interviewed by Binoo K. John



The union finance minister, V P Singh, in action at the recording of *Janvani*: how free is the communication?

Mantrivani or Sarkarvani?

The popular TV programme *Janvani* is neither, although efforts to muzzle it are afoot

Despite attempts to silence the voice of the 'people's parliament' on television, Doordarshan's popular show, *Janvani* is to continue. The programme, conceived by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as an occasion for freewheeling dialogue between the common man and cabinet ministers, will feature in the concluding episode, a face-to-face talk with the Prime Minister himself. This was announced by union minister of state for information and broadcasting V N Gadgil, during a meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee of his ministry when there were strong rumours that the programme (which has a 85 per cent viewership) would be discontinued. An impression was created that some cabinet ministers were so severely court-martialled at the common man's press conference that the credibility of their ministry was at stake. The poor performance of some ministers on *Janvani* was only offset by the superlative performance of the others. This firmly established the new found role of the medium of television as the mirror of democracy. Earlier, such an uncensored ex-

change of views with cabinet ministers was considered taboo. Today, *Janvani* has stepped in to establish the age of free communication.

The idea of *Janvani* was selected by the Prime Minister and his aides, Arun Singh and Romi Chopra. It was taken from the BBC programme "Facing the Nation" which was telecast in Britain for 30 years. The proposal to launch a similar programme over Doordarshan was discussed during a cabinet meeting. In March this year, Doordarshan was asked to approach ministers to face questions by people from all parts of the country. The letter, written by V N Gadgil to central minister for works and housing Abdul Ghafoor, is illustrative of the aim of *Janvani*. The letter (No MSIB/701/CAB/85) reads "The Prime Minister has observed that with a view to bring the people closer to the government and further strengthening the bonds of understanding, fuller use of the popular medium of television should be made. In a democratic society, the government owes it to the people to understand the difficulties experienced by them due to any reason,

including the inadequacy of the administrative structure or services and to share with them the solution." The minister, advocating the need for such an independent dialogue on television, concluded that "the airing of grievances would not only give profound satisfaction to the people, but also help tone up the administration at various levels." With these objectives the first programme of *Janvani* (featuring union minister for food and civil supplies Rao Birendra Singh) was telecast on 12 March. The fortnightly programme was not noticed much, till the third episode which featured the railway minister Bansi Lal. The railway minister faced strong criticism after his telecast, as out of 20 questions posed to him on various matters related to his ministry, he gave non-committal answers to 18. Nevertheless, with that programme, *Janvani* has gained momentum as is apparent from the large number of letters Doordarshan receives before every telecast.

In spite of reports of *Janvani* buckling under pressure from ministers and their staff, it has had the unique

distinction of its presenters not succumbing to political influences. Persons who pose questions are selected from their letters to Doordarshan. The producer enjoys control over the kind of questions eventually aired. According to the present producer, Romesh Chandra, the questions are under no circumstances released to the minister's office before the recording of *Janvani* which is telecast 24 hours later. Said Chandra: "*Janvani* is an experiment for reinforcing the faith of the people in democracy. The idea behind such a programme would be lost if there was no spontaneous conversation and questions were released in advance." According to him, the response the programme got from viewers was indicative of its popularity. In a report prepared by the audience research bureau of Doordarshan, the break-up of the letters received for *Janvani* is important. While Rao Birendra Singh received 2,288 letters, Bansi Lal got 10,329, health minister Mohsina Kidwai 830, education minister K.C. Pant 8,874, works

and housing minister Abdul Ghafoor 4,361 and finance minister V.P. Singh 8,574 letters.

Trouble over the much-publicised programme first began when in July Rajiv Gandhi's political secretary, M.L. Fotedar, requested Doordarshan for the previous month's recordings of *Janvani*. A search was launched for the master tapes and it was discovered that the programmes had been erased by the *Janvani*'s erstwhile producer, Kuber Dutt. Although Dutt insisted that he had erased the recording in the absence of written instructions from the directorate, the episode led to his suspension. On 20 July, after the master video tapes of the episodes featuring Rao Birendra Singh, Buta Singh and K.C. Pant remained untraced, Doordarshan's deputy director general, Shiv Sharma, wrote to Kuber Dutt. The terse letter (No. TVD/DDP(R)/6/85) said: "Keeping in view the importance of *Janvani* it was essential that all recordings should have been preserved. Why and how the recordings were erased

may kindly be explained." Kuber Dutt failed to produce the copies of the recordings for the Prime Minister's office and was served the suspension orders two days later. Says Dutt now: "I have been made a victim of *Janvani*. While there were written instructions issued to producers to preserve recordings of some programmes including those featuring the Prime Minister, or others which have archival value, I had no instructions to preserve *Janvani* recordings. It is obvious that the erasing of tapes is an excuse to ease me out since I was unflinching in my stand while producing *Janvani*." Now Doordarshan officials have received written instructions to preserve all *Janvani* recordings. It has also been pointed out by some Doordarshan officials involved with *Janvani* that though Dutt insists he had no instructions to keep the recordings, he had himself set a precedent by taking copies of tapes of the first three episodes of the same programme personally to the Prime Minister's house. Was it not negligence on



V.P. Singh (left) being briefed by the programme's producer Romesh Chandra (right) : a rare experiment

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the part of the producer to wipe out even the master tapes of other episodes?

As Doordarshan officials started a *Adharna* to protest against the suspension of Kuber Dutt on 20 August, V N Gadgil admitted in the Lok Sabha that the video recordings had been erased. The discussion about *Janvani* on the floor of the House again proves the importance of the programme both for its audience and the concerned ministries. Pressure tactics were first applied on Doordarshan mandarins after the recording of education minister K C Pant's question-answer session. Once the recording was over, the personal staff of the minister requested the edited version be shown to them before it was telecast. While viewing the recording, they objected to seven minutes being allotted to a young student from Meerut demanding an answer to his question on why his examination results had been delayed. The objection of the minister's aides was overruled and the exchange between the student and interviewee carried verbatim. Though the minister was asked by the in-appropriate editing of the programme, the question resulted in benefiting 60,000 students whose results were released after the matter was discussed over *Janvani*. On another occasion, an invitee from New Delhi requested the intervention of finance minister V P Singh during the *Janvani* session for withdrawing Rs 40,000 which she had deposited with a bank. Two days after the grievance of the housewife was aired, the amount was duly returned to her. Instructions were also issued from the minister's office that in future, such cases should not result in the harassment of complainants. Similar action is also believed to have been taken by the finance ministry on the huge stock of letters which was sent to it from Doordarshan. It is a practice now with Doordarshan officials to convey all letters received for each instalment of *Janvani* to the concerned ministry.

Janvani has been received well by viewers, it has also attracted the attention of the Prime Minister. Doordarshan officials disclosed that the line up for the future would include other ministers like Ashok Gehlot, Veerendra Patil, Ashok Sen, Nawal Kishore Sharma, P A Sangma and S B Chavan. There is a demand from Members of Parliament for ministers of state and chief ministers to appear in *Janvani*. Doubts have also been raised about the spontaneity



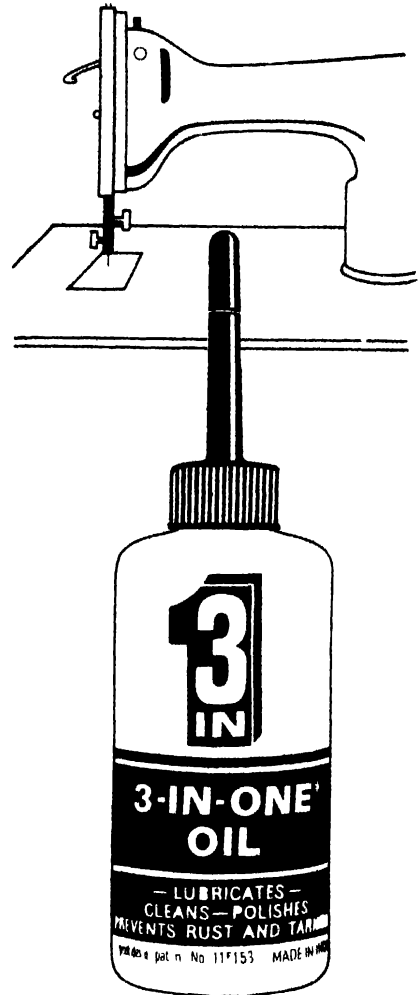
Kuber Dutt 'victimised'?

ty of the programme being retained in view of the controversies arising out of it. While in an office note from the deputy director of programmes Samiran Choudhury (No DDP(S)4/85) to Kuber Dutt there were instructions to select questions for *Janvani* which are "hard hitting and point to corrupt practices," a recent communication from the Prime Minister to V N Gadgil indicates that there may be a subtle change in the personality of the programme. The Prime Minister had suggested in his letter that "the encounters should not degenerate into a personal grouse hour. Redressal of individual grievances is important but the programme is meant to explore questions of policy." According to Kuber Dutt, who had produced the first eight instalments of *Janvani*, the new instructions from the Prime Minister will result in removing much of the sting from the programme. Said he "If the Prime Minister feels this is a 'people's parliament,' why is he issuing instructions to the Parliament? With the strong criticism voiced against the programme by some ministers who have featured on it, it will not be long before it will be taken off the air. He pointed out that there has been a suggestion from some viewers to change the name of the programme to either *Saikarvani* or *Mantrivani*. It remains to be seen whether *Janvani* which means the "people's voice" will be throttled before the impressive list of cabinet ministers is complete or at least before the union minister of state for information and broadcasting, V N Gadgil, is also put in front of the electronic Frankenstein.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

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Talking Over Genocide

Sri Lanka's Tamils find India keener to see the peace talks go on than condemn the atrocities against them

As the second phase of the Thimphu talks petered out, the Tamil militants seemed to be caught between the devil and the deep sea—a recalcitrant government back home and an Indian government that was apparently only interested in an 'instant solution' to the island's ethnic crisis. The known enemy was the Sri Lanka government that was covertly "intent upon the extermination of the Tamils." Bitter historical experience had compelled the militants (who formed the Eelam National Liberation Front, ENLF) to believe that for the Sri Lanka government, the Thimphu talks were a fiendish charade where they could buy time by putting forward a jaded mockery of proposals for devolution of power to the Tamils, while strengthening their armed forces to ultimately opt for a military solution to the ethnic im-

broglie. The predictable behavioural patterns of the Sri Lanka government did not cause them anxiety. They expected it and to that extent were psychologically prepared for it. But what has alarmed and dismayed them is the behaviour of the unknown friend, India.

While they continue to have immense faith in Rajiv Gandhi, they are still apprehensive about the *modus operandi* of the intelligence agencies, namely the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) who are acting as intermediaries between the Indian government and Tamils. For the first time the militants complained about the 'undue pressure' they were subjected to by the agencies. Pressure has been building up on them ever since the summit meeting between Mr Gandhi and Mr Jayewardene in June this year but it peaked on the

night of 17 August after the Tamil delegation staged a walk-out in Thimphu. While Romesh Bhandari, foreign secretary, has been given the responsibility of dealing with the Sri Lanka government, the agencies have been entrusted with the task of getting the militants to come to the negotiating table. In their zealotry to 'do their duty' they have resorted to threats, blackmail and armtwisting to get the militants back to the negotiating table. Surely the knuckledusters-and-lathi philosophy is grotesquely unsuited for solving intricate and sensitive political problems.

For the Tamil delegation, Thimphu II had added injury to insult. First came the modified version of the July proposals that heightened their suspicion about the fact that the Sri Lanka government was not serious about a political settlement. And then came the news that about 200 Tamil civilians in Vavuniya had been brutally massacred by the security forces. (The Trincomalee incidents came later). On 17 August the Tamils handed over a statement to the leader of the Sri Lanka team Hector Jayewardene. The statement read, "As we have talked here in Thimphu the genocidal intent of the Sri Lankan state has manifested itself in the continued killings of Tamils in their homeland. In the most recent incidents which have occurred during the past few days more than 200 innocent Tamil civilians, including young children—whose only crime is that they are Tamils—have been killed by the Sri Lanka armed forces running amok in Vavuniya and elsewhere. These events are proof of the intention of the Sri Lanka government to seek a military solution to the Tamil national question. It is farcical to continue peace talks at Thimphu when there is no peace and no security for the Tamil people in their homelands. We do not seek to terminate the talks at Thimphu but our participation in peace talks has been now rendered impossible by the conduct of the Sri Lankan state which has acted in violation of the cease-fire agreements which constitute the fundamental basis for Thim-

Tamil guerrillas killed by Sri Lankan forces



SPECIAL REPORT

phu talks." The Tamils then walked out. The time was 4.40 pm.

Mr Bhandari, to whose diplomatic genius one can attribute the Thimphu talks, lost his temper with the Tamil delegates for bringing about the collapse of the talks. Bhandari started off on the wrong foot because his instinctive reaction was to blame the Tamils for the failure of the talks and lambast them for their "blunder" in staging a walk-out. His bid to persuade them to return to the table was defeated in the flurry of heated exchanges between him and the ENLF delegates, in particular Mr Satyendra of TELO. The militants had always suspected that Mr Bhandari empathised more with the Sri Lankans than with them. The ranking suspicions snowballed into a broiling confrontation. The ENLF delegates appealed that Bhandari's priority was clearly to resume the talks at any cost rather than protest against the shabby proposals and the carnage of Vavuniya, which is a serious violation of the cease-fire accord. Instead of being sympathetic, Bhandari was incensed. Wishing to avert a ghastly collision, Amirthalingam, the TULF leader and Vasudeva of the PLOT apologised on behalf of the Tamil delegates for the acrimonious confrontation. Incidentally, there is a schism in the Tamil delegation with the ENLF on one side and the TULF and PLOT together on the other side. However, this inherent division has not yet seriously affected the unity of the delegation. The night of 17 August made one thing clear: just as the Sri Lankan delegation expressed a crisis of confidence against Mrs Gandhi's special envoy Mr G. Parthasarathy, the ENLF seems to be experiencing a crisis of confidence regarding Mr Bhandari who they fear, harbours antipathy towards them.

But more than Bhandari it is the "arbitrary" behaviour of the intelligence agencies that has upset the militants. What infuriated the militants was the cursory dismissal of the report about the Vavuniya incident as a "gross exaggeration" by the agencies. By this time, Trincomallee was also engulfed in anti-Tamil violence with large-scale killing of Tamils and burning of Tamil property by the security forces and armed Sinhala thugs. Whenever the militants disagreed or failed to toe the line, the agencies warned that they would withdraw their "support." The militants resented the fact that the government of India, instead of applying pressure on the Sri Lankan government to put forward meaning-



Tamil refugees on the shores of Rameshwaram, as they arrive in India

ful proposals, chose to exert pressure on the militants to continue with the Thimphu talks even when the masses were being brutally attacked.

The militants were also appalled that the Indian government had not officially voiced its concern about the Vavuniya and Trincomallee incidents. They construed this as a "drastic shift in the priorities and perceptions" of the Indian government. They could not help comparing Mr Gandhi's silence over the atrocities perpetrated by the Sri Lankan armed forces with his mother's strong protests whenever Tamils civilians were killed. Mrs Gandhi had often gone on record that "India could not remain silent when innocent Tamils were being killed in Sri Lanka." An ENLF member told SUNDAY, "When Mrs Gandhi was alive there was constant fear in Jayewardene that she would not take kindly to any act of violence against the Tamils. When Mrs Gandhi was assassinated, more than the Indians, it is we Tamils of Sri Lanka who were orphaned. Mr Gandhi's soft diplomacy is just not going to work with Jayewardene. The more soft he is with Mr Jayewardene, the greater will be the acceleration of the genocidal onslaught on the Tamils by the Sri Lanka government." It was only on 21 August when 331 Tamil refugees landed on the shores of

Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu, fleeing their homeland following the Vavuniya incident that India chose to express concern over the killing of innocent Tamil civilians.

In the meantime the scene had shifted from the dragon kingdom of the Himalayas to the dingy streets of Kodambakkam where the ENLF has its offices. The ENLF leaders of the four groups were told that Mr Gandhi wanted them to come to Delhi. The initial reaction of the ENLF members was to disbelieve that the summons had emanated from the PM. In July, on the eve of the talks in Thimphu, they had been summoned to Delhi, ostensibly by Mr Gandhi. But the three-day Delhi sojourn turned out to be a brainstorming session with the RAW officials. Despite repeated appeals, they did not get to meet the PM. Fearing that it would be a repetition of the armtwisting session, the ENLF did not respond. Crime branch and IB officials, who were acting as emissaries of the RAW in Madras, assured the ENLF that this time the PM had kept time for them. The ENLF, however, refused to rush into the matter, saying they needed time to discuss the issue among themselves and present a coherent statement before the PM when they met him. Meanwhile V. Pirabhakaran, leader

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SPECIAL REPORT

of the LTTE, Sri Sabaratnam, leader of the TELO and Padmanabha, leader of the EPRLF, became totally inaccessible to the intelligence agencies.

An intriguing development has meanwhile taken place which portends serious implications for Sri Lanka's ethnic strife. All of a sudden news analysis of the Sri Lankan situation emanating from 'sources' in the government in Delhi are claiming that Uma Maheshwaran, leader of the PLOT, is the person to "watch." Oddly enough identical words are used to describe Uma's "ascendancy." The representatives of the Indian government expound that among the militants only Uma is "balanced, politically mature and canny." In promoting Uma it is pointed that in the event of a political settlement the Tamils require a "shrewd politician" and Uma fits the bill. It doesn't seem to matter that Uma's "political astuteness" was not in evidence when his arch rival, the LTTE, outmanoeuvred him by joining the ENLF, thereby isolating Uma from the militant mainstream.

It is equally intriguing that Colombo datelined despatches point out that the ruling UNP feels that only Uma has responded positively to the Indian persuasion among the militants. Moreover, even the TULF is more favourably disposed to the PLOT than the ENLF. The fact is that Uma is being given an entirely artificial boost. Independent sources from the Tamil areas—essentially visiting foreign journalists and Tamil refugees—categorically state that PLOT does not enjoy the kind of mass support that the LTTE, TELO, and EPRLF does. They have been completely overtaken by the LTTE and TELO on every conceivable front, be it guerilla warfare, helping affected Tamil civilians with provisions or visiting refugees in Tamil Nadu. Apart from issuing statements deploring the 'hit and run' tactics of the LTTE, or expressing the need to enlist the support of the Sinhala proletariat for the Marxist revolution of the Tamils and to resist forces of imperialism and failing to smuggle arms to Tamil areas, Uma has done nothing tangible to promote the cause of Eelam to which he is supposedly committed. On the other hand, he seems to have developed ties with representatives of the Sri Lanka government.

The second phase of the Thimphu talks seemed jinxed right from the beginning with Hector Jayewardene preempting the Tamils by rejecting outright the four cardinal principles



TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam



they decided to press. He also declared that the government of Sri Lanka "did not acknowledge the right or status of any persons present in these talks to represent or negotiate on behalf of all the Tamils living in Sri Lanka." He also said that the militants should renounce their armed struggle and close down their camps in Sri Lanka and abroad if the settlement reached at Thimphu could be implemented. The Tamil delegation raised the issue of colonisation, demanding to know why Tamil villages like Thinnaimaravadi, Kokilai, Karunatukeni and Gnayarhad been amalgamated into the Sinhala-majority district of Anuradhapura. They also raised the issue of clandestine colonisation in certain areas in Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Muthur districts where the Tamils were chased out of their homes.

Hector Jayewardene did not reply to these points even in the subsequent rounds of talks. Anyway, the Tamils subsequently stressed that they were interested in a 'rational dialogue' with the Lankan delegation. They also insisted that their legitimacy as the representatives of the Tamils should be acknowledged as otherwise the talks would be an exercise in futility. While rejecting this point, Mr Jayewardene however assured that "there is sufficient representation of Tamils in Thimphu for the talks to arrive at a negotiated settlement." On 16 August the new proposal was presented which the Tamils rejected the next day, pointing out that it was only a rehash of the earlier proposal which, instead of granting genuine autonomy to the Tamils, only reinforced the centre's power to manage the district councils. After issuing their statement on the Vavuniya incidents the Tamils walked out.

They made it clear that the talks could resume only on three conditions: first, the immediate cessation of state violence against Tamil civilians; second, the total and faithful observance of the ceasefire agreement by the Sri Lankan government, and third, the submission of a fresh set of proposals. The Tamil delegation meanwhile indicated that it would be willing to return to the table using the "CWC" proposals as a "working basis" for negotiations.

S. Thondaman, president of the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), which represents the plantation Tamils, who is a member of the UNP cabinet, had submitted a set of proposals at the time of the all-party conference in 1984. The Tamils, including the ENLF, were favourably disposed to the CWC proposals because they incorporated the four cardinal principles—though euphemistically. For instance, it did not mention Tamil home lands. It referred to them as a 'linguistic region'. It envisioned the amalgamation of the north and east, an issue that is firmly opposed by the UNP government. That Tamils have the status of people of a district and their right to self-determination and the restoration of civil and political rights to the plantation workers had got due mention in the CWC proposals. It was also reported that the Sri Lankan delegation was willing to discuss the CWC proposals.

As one of the Tamil leaders told SUNDAY "There is no point in negotiating if the Sri Lankan delegation merely says they are prepared to discuss the CWC proposals." ■

Anita Pratap, Madras

A Marriage on the Rocks

Differences between the Congress(I) and the AIADMK threaten to break up the alliance of convenience in Tamil Nadu

The Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu is like a dowager duchess with a wandering eye. In its search for a partner, it has always thought it politically prudent to take the help of either the DMK or the AIADMK depending on which way the wind was blowing. In 1977 and 1984 for example, the Congress rode piggy back on the AIADMK and did well at the hustings.

This search for a Dravida crutch by the Congress started before the 1967 elections when the Congress was ruling at the centre. The poll results disappointed the Congress leaders; the party was drowned in the tidal wave of the Dravida movement. The DMK swept to power leaving the Congress with only 27 MLAs in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. Since then, in every election, the Congress has sought one of the Dravida parties for help. Fortunately, due to the interne-cine quarrels between the DMK and the AIADMK, one or the other party has always lent it support. Today, however, the situation is different. With the emergence of Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu finds itself in a position in which it does not need help from either of the Dravida parties.

The first discordant notes were struck when 14 Congress(I) MPs from Tamil Nadu recently met in Delhi under the leadership of Mr Singaraivelu, the MP from Thanjavur. The MPs complained about the high handed attitude of the AIADMK and said that the state government was implementing the anti poverty programmes in the rural areas in a 'partial manner'. What they meant was that the AIADMK government was taking credit for the central government funded schemes. They also said that the district functionaries of the Congress(I) were not treated properly by the AIADMK administration.

The Congress(I) AIADMK marriage of convenience today seems to be on the rocks. The combine which had won 37 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats had routed the opposition in the state. Friction between the two parties had always existed but political expediency had forced the leadership of both the parties to keep quiet. Now that there are no such compulsions like elections, the fac-

tions within the two parties are active once again.

The AIADMK on its part, too has left no stones unturned to take the Congress(I) to task. On a few occasions, Kolandaivelu, a former minister in the MGR cabinet complained about the step motherly attitude of the centre to Tamil Nadu on the floor of the house. Perhaps more than anyone else K. Kalimuthu, AIADMK minister for agriculture symbolises the anti Congress(I) sentiment in the party. At a recent public meeting he said, 'The AIADMK does not nurture aspirations of being the ruling party at the centre. So let the Congress(I) not nurture hopes of becoming the ruling party in Tamil Nadu.' This



G. K. Moopanar: no base at home

seems unacceptable to the Congress(I). The AIADMK does not want to become the ruling party at the centre because it cannot. The Congress(I), on the other hand, wants to become the ruling party because it knows it can one day rule the state.

The Congress(I) thus finds itself in a piquant situation. In the Tamil Nadu Assembly it is now the main opposition party. It has so far been unable to adapt itself to the political schizophrenia demanded by the situation. It has to be an ally and critic at the same time. Soon after the election M. Palaniyandi, president of the Tamil Nadu unit of the Congress(I), had told SUNDAY, "We will play the role of a responsible opposition. We will try to expose acts of omission

and commission by the AIADMK government. But our criticism will be constructive, not destructive like the DMK's. The Congress(I) has been finding it very difficult to translate this goal into reality. The party is often a passive spectator in the Assembly and the occasions when the Congress(I) MLAs or MPs have taken the AIADMK government to task have been few.

Intra party bickering has risen due to a host of problems. Investigations by SUNDAY reveal that the immediate deep rooted cause of the tension between the two parties at this juncture is over the issue of the local polls. Tamil Nadu has not had local polls for the last 15 years. When the AIADMK government assumed power for the first time in 1977, it had promised to hold local polls immediately. But nothing was done for eight years. On his return from New York in February this year after his kidney transplant, MGR announced that the elections to the panchayats and municipalities would be held soon. Subsequently, through the minister for self government, P. U. Shunmugam, MGR indicated that he would like to hold the polls on a non party basis. This according to political observers was done by MGR because he was motivated by his desire to protect his party's long term interests. If MGR decided on the elections to the 378 panchayat unions and 25 municipalities being held on a party basis, it would mean continuing the alliance with the Congress(I). If the same 3:1 ratio between the Congress(I) and the AIADMK which was adopted for the Assembly elections was continued, it would mean the AIADMK parting with nearly 100 panchayat union seats and eight municipality seats. The AIADMK is naturally disinclined to barter away these seats to the Congress(I) because the AIADMK's votebank mainly comprises the rural people. On the other hand, continuing the alliance can also mean the Congress(I) winning a large number of seats. Once the Congress(I) wins the local polls, it will consolidate its position by building up its base among the rural people.

SPECIAL REPORT

The AIADMK is also not keen to continue the alliance for precisely the same reason. Rather than help a potential rival build up its base, MGR believes it is wiser to opt for elections on a non-party basis. He will thereby put a stop to the Congress(I) developing roots in Tamil Nadu and at the same time be hailed as a "true democrat."

At this point of time, however, the AIADMK chooses to gloss over the fact that there are misunderstandings creeping in between the two parties. S. Raghavanandam, general secretary of the AIADMK told SUNDAY: "The basis of our alliance with the Congress(I) was constituency adjustments, to borrow a phrase from Anna. There was no working programme evolved by the two parties at the time of the elections. We have not merged. Naturally there will be differences of opinion once in a while between two democratic parties. There is absolutely no hitch between us and we continue to be on very friendly terms."

The Congress(I) has so far chosen to play its role on a low key in Tamil Nadu. Party activities are almost non-existent. The executive committee of the TNCC(I) has not been convened since November 1983. Indira Gandhi's death was not officially mourned by the party. The alliance between the Congress(I) and the AIADMK was not ratified by the executive committee. No meetings were organised to thank the voters for the overwhelming public support the party received at the elections. The party continues to be riddled by anomalies. While O. Subramaniam holds two posts—he is the leader of the opposition and the president of the Muthuramalingam DCC(I)—the post of the president of the Ramanathapuram unit of the party lies vacant. In Tiruchy, there is a DCC(I) president but no committee members. The president of the Nilgiris DCC(I) Major Mathan was charged with an attempt to murder a harijan worker. He was subsequently convicted to five years' rigorous imprisonment by the sessions court. In spite of that, the TNCC(I) did not consider it prudent or necessary to expel him from the party, thereby tarnishing the image of the Congress(I) in the eyes of the local people. The party continues to be rudderless in the state. G.K. Moopanar is Delhi's all-powerful MP from Tamil Nadu. He has immense support from within the TNCC(I) because persons close to him hold positions of authority in the party. Moopanar is yet to develop mass support, which he does not even have in Thanjavur from where he hails.



V.R. Nedunchezian welcoming MGR at a function: how long will he rule?

The Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu may be short on activities, but is long on ambition. It is widely believed that the DMK is a spent force. The Congress(I) in its turn, views the AIADMK as a loose, amorphous group, the only binding factor being MGR. Despite his evergreen legend, MGR is getting old. His health is certainly not what it used to be. Sections in the Congress(I) told SUNDAY that they were convinced that MGR no longer has the kind of control he had over the party. Though MGR may be considered to be a demigod of sorts, his government is as guilty of inefficiency, corruption and nepotism as any other government in the country. Ironically enough, the Congress(I) ought to be grateful to MGR for creating the right climate in the state for its re-entry. The situation is made even easier by the fact the MGR is disinclined to nominate a successor. A person nominated by MGR would be acceptable to the masses. Said Raghavanandam: "MGR will never nominate a successor. He will never impose anybody. The general council of the AIADMK will choose somebody when the time comes. After all, Nehru did not nominate a successor. No democrat does that; but such questions are hypothetical. MGR is in fine condition and we expect him to be chief minister for a long time."

Sources close to the Congress(I) told SUNDAY that the party's high command is working on a programme that will bring the Congress back to

power in Tamil Nadu. The party has learnt a bitter lesson from the Andhra coup in 1984. No such mistake will be repeated in the case of MGR. Political expediency apart, it is a fact that Rajiv Gandhi has cordial relations with MGR. If anything were to happen to MGR before the end of his term, SUNDAY learns that centre will opt for fresh elections and not a coalition ministry. In the post-MGR phase there is bound to be a vertical split in the AIADMK and the elders within the party will either remain with the party or go to DMK. This group is anti-Congress and comprises politicians like V.R. Nedunchezian, K. Kalimuthu, R.M. Veerappan, P.U. Shunmugam and others. Those who have grown under MGR will join the Congress(I). The latter group, according to some sources, is greater in strength.

The Congress(I) rally of 15 July proved in no uncertain terms that Rajiv Gandhi has a charisma of his own in Tamil Nadu. As M.P. Subramaniam told this correspondent, "There is no question of the Congress(I) even attempting to dislodge the MGR government. Why should we, when we know that we will be able to capture power in Tamil Nadu in the normal democratic process. We have been out of power for 18 years. We can wait for a few more years. As matters stand, prospects of the Congress(I) returning to power in Tamil Nadu in the next elections are bright."

Anita Pratap, Madras

Assam: The

The battle now is of the ballot and it is going to be

The meeting was summoned at short notice to protest against the exclusion of names from the electoral rolls for the next elections. Even the organisers did not expect so many people to turn up for the protest rally at such an obscure place as Neelbagan in Nowgong district of Assam where immigrant Bengali Muslims form a bulk of the population. Some 30,000 people—both Muslims and Hindus—cheered lustily as the frail, bearded chief of the Assam unit of the Jamaat-ul-Ulema, Maulana Ahmed Ali, concluded his speech. "It is about time the Prime Minister of India paused to ponder whether his name would be written in letters of gold or of blood," he declared. If the meeting reflected the current sour mood of Assam's vast immigrant population, it also flashed a red signal to the ruling Congress(I) in Assam.

Only two years ago when most of Assam boycotted the elections, the immigrants risked their lives to turn the tide and help instal the Congress(I) in power. Today, they are angry and upset as they find their future bartered away for a fragile truce. Union home minister S. B. Chavan only reinforced their fears and suspicions by admitting to the members of his ministry's parliamentary consultative committee that while signing the Assam accord the centre did not go deep into its possible legal implications as the union law minister, who was abroad, could not be consulted. It is quite possible that many of the provisions in the accord may not stand the test in a court of law. Going by their past attitude and behaviour, the immigrants are unlikely to remain resigned to their fate and accept whatever comes.

What will happen next in Assam largely depends on how the immigrants are going to behave in the next elections to be held at the end of the year. Assam's demographic profile is such that no political party or group can hope to win power without their support. The last headcount in 1971 showed that the minorities—both linguistic and religious—add up to about 33 per cent of the population. Since then, the balance may have tilted further in favour of the minorities. There can be no illusion about the fact that if they decide to pool their numerical strength they can swing the elections in favour of the party or the group of their choice.

In 1983 they chose the Congress(I). Will they support the same party again? That is one question whose answer Assam's Congress(I) chief minister Hiteswar Saikia would like



Jubilant supporters of the Assam movement on the streets of Guwahati after they came to know of the

to find out. Obviously, after the accord he cannot take their support for granted. Much to Saikia's discomfort, the accord has put him on the defensive when he should actually be in the driver's seat. It is more out of desperation than anything else that he is talking about converting the next election into a "referendum" to seek a mandate for extending the present cut-off year—pegged at 1966—to 1971: it is only to reassure the minorities about their future and win back their confidence. Under normal circumstances Saikia would have been pulled up by his party bosses for promoting such an idea which actually repudiates the accord signed at the initiative of his party president and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

If Saikia has been spared it is because his party high command also knows how vital the votes of the minorities are in electoral terms.

Subtle differences are already being sought to be drawn between the party and the government for a possible argument in the future that the

Congress(I) as a party is entitled to its opinion on the accord, which need not necessarily coincide with those of the government which signed the terms of settlement. Obviously, the Congress(I) is trying to clutch at any straw to keep itself afloat and hopefully, coast to victory. It is almost certain that in its election manifesto, the Congress(I) will reiterate its commitment not to disturb or displace any of the immig-

Next Round

by R. S. Verma, reports Tooshar Pandit from Guwahati



Signing of the Assam accord

D. epak Berna uat

igrants who have come to the state before 25 March 1971

The challenge will, inevitably, come from the present All Assam Students' Union (AASU) leaders, who having successfully steered an anti-immigrant agitation for six years on a non-political platform, now plan to unite all the partners in the movement in a regional political party and enter the electoral fray. How far the AASU leaders will succeed in this is still a big question. Their past attempts did not succeed. And, already some of the political components of the movement like the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad (PLP) have signalled a parting of ways. For six long years the politicians who had lost their credibility with the people,

had to put up with the AASU. But now they are more likely to move away and reassert themselves using the argument that the AASU has outlived its purpose.

The present AASU leaders, who at one time appeared to be losing ground, have certainly gained in stature with the signing of the Assam accord. If their followers shouted "Rajiv Gandhi Zindabad," while welcoming them, they were only acknowledging a debt. The question still remains whether these leaders will be able to cash in on their resurrected popularity, especially when they are preparing to fight a battle without the AASU banner. Also linked to this question is another: Will the future AASU leaders sing the

same tune and remain content with playing second fiddle to their predecessors?

Even if the present AASU leaders succeed in raising a regional party it would still need the support of the minorities to be in power. Much of the anti-immigrant movement derived its strength from the Assamese speaking caste Hindus, the urban middle class and young students whose strength in electoral terms is not enough to put any AASU sponsored party or a combination of parties supported by them in power. The *Assam Tribune*, a leading English daily of Assam, pointed out in 1982 that out of the 126 state Assembly seats only 41 were the Assamese speaking people in majority. So, even if there is a complete polarisation of the Assamese speaking voters, the proposed regional party could, at the most, get about one third of the Assembly seats.

How then, could the Congress(I) be dislodged from power? The present AASU leaders are counting on a split in the minority votes, with at least a section voting for a regional party to spite the Congress(I). By this calculation, the Bengali speaking Hindus, who constitute about 10 per cent of the population, would largely vote for the CPI(M). The CPI(M), too, thinks in the same way and that is why it has come out so strongly against the Assam accord. On the other hand, a section of the Bengali Muslims may vote for a regional party, some to vent their disappointment for being treated shabbily by the Congress(I) and others to buy a new insurance policy. It is, therefore, understandable why, while launching the new party, the present AASU leaders are trying to mend fences with their erstwhile followers among the minority communities who deserted them in the wake of 1983 elections riots.

But the minorities are yet to indicate their preference. Even if the Bengali Hindus turn to the CPI(M) for protection, the Bengali Muslims may decide to stand up on their own to fight for their future without reposing the trust in any of the contenders for power. What may tempt them to take this line is their growing numerical strength in the Assam Assembly (in 1952 they had only six MLAs against 28 in 1980 and 34 in 1983). In the event of a see-saw battle for power, even 20 MLAs can have a decisive voice.

Apart from the minorities, two other numerically significant groups which can upset all political calculations and predictions are the plains

SPECIAL REPORT



(From l to r) Assam student leaders Lalit Rajkhowa, Prafulla Mahanta and Noyen Sarma at a reception given by the Delhi University Students Union after the accord was signed

tribals, and tea garden labourers. The plains tribals who account for some 11 per cent of the population are not satisfied with the Assam accord. In the beginning they tended to support the anti-immigrant movement hoping it would drive out the immigrants who were occupying land and property in their exclusive reserves. But they dissociated themselves from the movement when they found that the Assamese-speaking people, blessed by the movement leaders, were poaching on their territory. These tribals, normally a Congress(I) votebank, may in the next election also decide to set up their own candidates. The tea garden labourers, mostly migrants from Orissa and Bihar, who make up for about five per cent of the population, have always been a strong base for the CPI(M) and it will, perhaps, continue to be so.

In the confusion, some national opposition leaders who were defeated in the December Lok Sabha elections are contemplating to stage a comeback, riding piggy-back of the anti-immigrant agitation leaders. In Guwahati one hears that at least three defeated opposition leaders—Atal Behari Vajpayee, H. N. Bahuguna and George Fernandes—are already toying with the idea of seeking election to the Lok Sabha from Assam, banking on the support of the AASU-sponsored opposition front. The AASU might not be averse to this as it could gain the front a wider acceptance for the price of a few seats.

The picture is still very hazy. But what is not in doubt is that the stakes in the next election are very high, especially for the movement leaders. If the Congress(I) wins again it would seriously undermine the justification

and the credibility of the anti-immigrant agitation. It would also stoke the fires again by confirming the fears and misgivings of the Assamese-speaking population that they have lost the battle of numbers to the immigrants.

On the other hand, if the AASU-sponsored party or a combination with it wins, it could renew the fears and suspicions among the immigrants making them even more desperate. A third and distinct possibility is that neither camp will win enough seats to form a government. Coalitions of convenience only add to uncertainty and can hardly give Assam the kind of stability it needs to restore confidence among the different communities which have been torn apart by six years of turmoil, strife and bloodshed. The next few months, therefore, are very crucial for Assam's future. □

The Assam Drama

The Beginning



AASU volunteers demonstrating in Guwahati in 1980

1979

8 June: A 12 hour *bandh* is held in Assam at the call of the All Assam Students Union (AASU)

10 October: The movement on the foreign nationals issue is formally launched by the AASU and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP). More than 100 000 hold a rally in Guwahati to express solidarity to the AASU AAGSP cause

3 December: A 24 hour successful *bandh* throughout Assam to press demands of the agitationists

20 December: Violence breaks out in Shillong. Shoot at sight orders and curfew imposed in Shillong

22 December: Administration of Shillong handed over to the army

1980

28 January: A delegation of the AASU comprising among others its president Pratulla Mahanta and general secretary Bhriugu Phukan arrives in Delhi for discussions with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

2 February: Indira Gandhi meets the delegation. The agitation leaders present a memorandum listing their demands

5-6 February: The movement leaders meet home minister Zail Singh. The government rejects the demands pertaining to the cutoff year for determining foreigners



AASU leaders on their way to Delhi to hold negotiations in 1980

1 March: Mrs Gandhi meets opposition leaders to apprise them of the explosive situation in Assam. She once again appeals to the movement leaders to accept 1971 as the cutoff year for determining foreign nationals

7-12 March: Movement leaders meet Mrs Gandhi and Zail Singh but the discussion fails to break the impasse

5 April: Assam declared a disturbed area. Special powers given to the army to tackle violence

7 April: Guwahati High Court stays operation of the Assam Disturbed Area Act and Armed Forces Act

12 April: Indira Gandhi arrives in Guwahati and tries to persuade the movement leaders to accept 1971 as the base year. The leaders reject the idea

19 April: Around five lakh people deny curfew orders and march towards the Noonmati refinery to block the flow of oil from the refinery

29 April: Bhriugu Phukan and Pratulla Mahanta arrested under preventive detention

28 May: The All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) launches a counter movement

18 August: Movement leaders resume talks with the union minister of state for home in Shillong but the discussions come to an abrupt end as the agitationists insist on the withdrawal of the "repressive and punitive measures" imposed by the centre on Assam



The deserted streets of Guwahati during a janta curfew

17-25 September: Yet another round of talks. The dialogue suffers a jolt as the government expresses reservations about the National Register of Citizens, 1951 being a valid document on which identification of foreigners could be based

11 October: Fresh talks resume in New Delhi. Negotiations end without any consensus on the cutoff year

4 November: The government orders the army to take steps to flush out oil from Oil India pipelines frozen for months

24 November: Army called out in Guwahati to tackle widespread rioting

The Build-up

1981

18 May: A committee comprising representatives of the AASU, AAGSP and government officials is formed to discuss the question of detecting foreign nationals. A new formula is evolved by the centre that the unauthorised entrants of the 1961-1971 period should be re-

SPECIAL REPORT



Para-military forces arrest a tribal who was alleged to have taken part in the Nellie massacre

tained in the state. AASU and AAGSP reject the plan.
29 June—15 July: Another round of talks in New Delhi. The Assam student leaders reject the government's definition of a "foreigner" as it would make all Hindu refugees in Assam citizens of India.

22 August: Another round of futile talks is held between cabinet secretary Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib and a four member students' delegation led by Prafulla Mahanta.

15 August: AASU call for a boycott of the independence day celebrations. Bomb explosions damage rail tracks throughout the state. A 24 hour *bandh* paralyses life in Assam.

27 October: AASU and the AAGSP submit a 15 point revised draft proposal to the centre. The draft says that all foreigners should be detected on the basis of the Constitution and the relevant laws, namely the Citizenship Act, 1955, the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1952.

Victims of the Nellie massacre

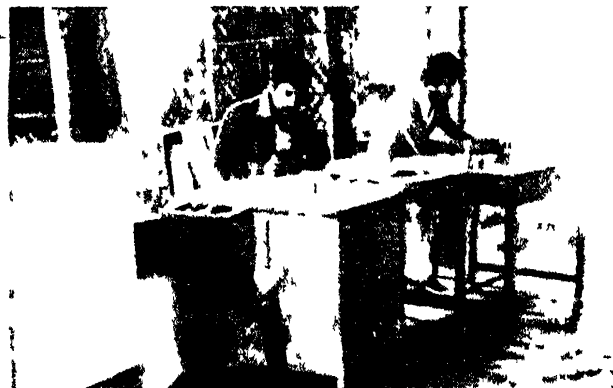


19 November: A 36 hour statewide *bandh*. Over 660 AASU activists arrested.

31 December: Three persons are killed when police opens fire on agitators setting up road blockades.

1982

18 January: A tripartite meeting of the agitation leaders, the leaders of the opposition parties in Parliament and the central government begins in New Delhi. It ended with an agreement between the movement leaders and the government whereby the security measures on the border between Assam and Bangladesh would be tightened to prevent infiltration.



A deserted polling booth during the Assembly elections in 1983

20 January: A 36 hour civil disobedience movement is launched by AASU.

23 January: Keshab Chandra Gogoi is sworn in as the chief minister of Assam.

9 June: Bomb explosion kills 18 people in Guwahati.

26 August: Another round of tripartite talks in New Delhi. Janata MP Ravindra Varma advances a formula to detect foreigners in Assam. The agitation leaders agree to discuss the formula.

28 August: Movement leaders suggest modifications to the Ravindra Varma formula.

7 November: Ravindra Varma presents a revised formula to break the stalemate. The talks break down as the student leaders reject the proposal.

The Climax



Policemen keep vigil during the 1983 Assembly elections

1983

3 January: A six member delegation of the movement leaders arrives in Delhi for negotiations with the centre

5 January: The talks break down on the question of the future of the post 1961 entrants

6 January: Election Commission announces Assam Assembly elections on 14, 17 and 19 February on the basis of the 1979 electoral rolls

7 January: The movement leaders decide to oppose the elections

8 February: Anti poll demonstration throughout the state organised by AASU and the AAGSP 11

killed and several injured in police firings and bomb explosions

9 February: Death toll rises to 36 on the eve of Indira Gandhi's visit to the state

11 February: Troops move in to protect vital installations in the state. Agitators seek intervention of Amnesty International. Death toll soars to 62

12 February: 11 people killed and thousands rendered homeless in communal violence in Kamrup and Lakhimpur districts

20 February: More than 1000 people are killed in a midnight massacre at Nellie in the Nagaon district

24 February: First round of polling. Over 100 are killed in violence throughout the state

27 February: A 13 member Congress(I) ministry headed by Hiteswar Saikia sworn in

1984

3 February: Centre issues guidelines for identifying foreigners. A 36 hour statewide road blockade programme in protest against Mrs Gandhi's visit to the state

25 April: Bhishma Narain Singh sworn in as the new Governor of Assam

The End

1985

25 January: The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) calls for a boycott of the Republic Day celebrations in the state in protest against the central government's failure to solve the six year old agitation

28 January: A five member delegation of the Assam movement leaders leaves for Delhi to begin official level talks with the centre

26 February: Hiteswar Saikia rules out dissolution of the state Assembly and says that a negotiated settlement would soon be reached

29 March: A five member AASU delegation meets the President in Shillong and demands dissolution of the Assam Assembly

6 April: First round of official level talks begin at Guwahati between union home secretary R D Pradhan and the movement leaders led by AASU president Prafulla Mahanta

8 April: The discussions end inconclusively. The movement leaders stick to their earlier stand that foreign nationals who entered the state between 1961 and 1971 should be disenfranchised and taken out of the state. They also demand the dissolution of the 'illegal' Assam Assembly

10 April: Saikia leaves for New Delhi for urgent talks with the centre

23 April: AASU announces in Delhi that they will start a fresh agitation from the first week of May following the government's failure to solve the foreigners problem. The leaders also regret the fact that they had received no intimation from the centre regarding talks



Army patrolling the streets of Guwahati to quell violence



Victims of the Chamaria violence being taken to hospital

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SPECIAL REPORT

24 April: The centre invites the movement leaders for discussions in New Delhi on 6 May

28 April: Hiteswar Saikia urges the people of the state not to respond to the AASU's call for a fresh stir

7 May: Negotiations begin in New Delhi between the movement leaders led by Prafulla Mahanta and the centre headed by the union home secretary R D Pradhan. Talks end inconclusively

28 June: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi indicates to a group of MLAs from Assam that the centre is inclined to accept the demand of the movement leaders to change the cut off date from 1971 to 1967 for the purpose of deleting the names of foreigners from the state voters list. The centre declares that the next round of talks would be held in mid July

29 July: Yet another round of talks begin in Shillong between the student leaders and the central government led by R D Pradhan

30 July: Major breakthrough achieved. AASU leaders declare that the talks had been most fruitful and that most of their demands had been accepted

5 August: Movement leaders Prafulla Mahanta and



Rajiv Gandhi with student leaders after the signing of the accord

Bhriгу Phukan of the AASU and Biraj Sarma of the AAGSP arrive in New Delhi for talks with the centre. The delegation meets the chief election commissioner R K Trivedi and complains that the revision of the electoral rolls on the basis of the 1971 rolls are defective

6 August: The Election Commission orders a thorough review of the draft electoral rolls of 13 of the total 126 Assembly constituencies in Assam

12 August: Official level talks begin in New Delhi. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visits Guwahati and tells a massive gathering

that soon there would be 'good news' for Assam

14 August: The movement leaders hold two rounds of talks with the Prime Minister. The discussions get bogged down on the question of the dissolution of the Assembly. A third round of discussions

15 August: A memorandum of settlement is signed between the AASU AAGSP leaders and the union government. Under the written accord, those foreign nationals who entered the state between 1 January 1966 and 4 March 1971 will be disenfranchised for ten years and those who came after 25 March 1971 will be deported

Compiled by Rajiv Bagchi



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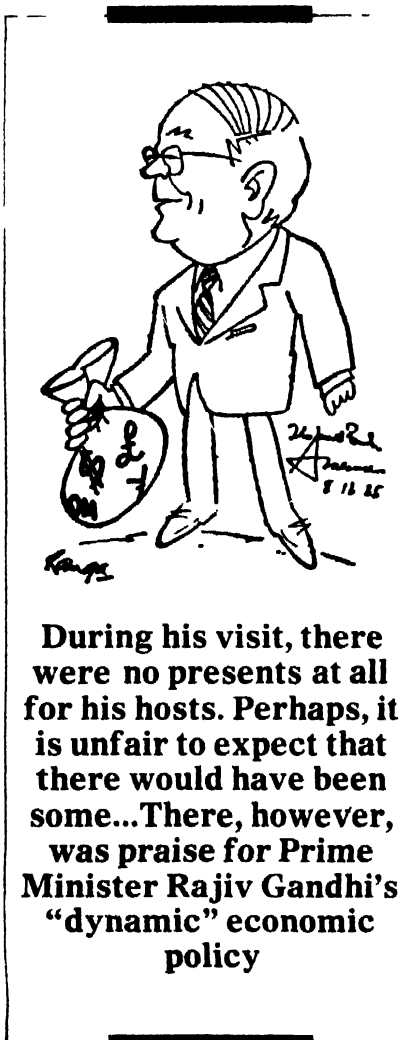
Plain speaking marks World Bank president's visit

"Concessional aid today is the scarcest commodity on planet earth," says the World Bank president A W Clausen. And this succinctly sums up the dilemma that countries like India are facing in meeting their development funding needs. The easy regime of aid from the International Development Association (IDA)—the soft loan window of the World Bank—is practically over. Moreover, the debt trap that some developing countries in Latin America and Africa have led themselves into, has cautioned India against going in for large scale commercial borrowings.

Clausen who was in India on a six day visit during the third week of August on an invitation from union finance minister V P Singh drove home the lesson that for a country of the size of India, no single institution could bear the burden of providing assistance. Therefore, the best course for India would be to "judiciously use" commercial borrowings, he said.

As is well known the World Bank comprises two bodies, viz the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). It also has a Switzerland based affiliate—the International Finance Corporation (IFC)—which lends to the private sector only. The IBRD loans to governments carry an interest rate of 8.82 per cent per annum down from 9.89 per cent a year ago. The IDA development credit does not carry any interest but only carries a nominal service charge of 0.75 per cent per annum. Besides, the liberal repayment terms—spread over 50 years, with a moratorium of ten years to start with—make the IDA a particularly attractive borrowal source for developing nations.

But this form of cheap credit is being increasingly and severely constricted. Major donor nations, led by the United States, have put the bank on notice that they will not be giving as much money as it wants. In fact, during the last replenishment (IDA VII) talks, the USA pledged a lesser amount and some other major donor countries followed suit, thus putting a strong leash on the bank's ability to dole out money.



During his visit, there were no presents at all for his hosts. Perhaps, it is unfair to expect that there would have been some... There, however, was praise for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's "dynamic" economic policy

India though, till now has had a rather cosy relationship with the bank which has sung paeans of praise for the way this country had managed its economic policies. India's creditworthiness—which reflects how much it can borrow from the commercial market—has been high mainly because it has never de-

taulted on principal or interest repayments. Thus Mr Clausen, who has headed the World Bank since 1981 after having spent a couple of decades in the Bank of America which he left as chairman, had some good words to say about India's economic management. Also, as expected, he had more than a few words of praise for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who he said had tried to strengthen the 'dynamic economic forces which come from the private sector.' India, the World Bank president felt, had "proved to the world" that liberal economic policies coupled with a free and open trading regime generate a better return than the wholly regimented alternative.

But what did Mr Clausen have to offer to India? During his visit, there were no presents, at all for his hosts. Perhaps it is unfair to expect that there would have been some. Instead he emphasised that if India is to achieve its highly ambitious Seventh Plan annualised growth rate of five per cent then it cannot depend only on the World Bank for its monetary needs. Commercial borrowings—which at present carry interest rates ranging between 14 and 18 per cent per annum—would necessarily have to be resorted to, warned Clausen. And there was nothing amiss in this, he reckoned. India's debt service ratio is now at a comfortable 15 per cent and anything below 20 per cent is considered to be good by the bank. Even in 1990, India's debt service ratio is slated to remain within bounds at a conservative 17.6 per cent.

At the same time, Mr Clausen also pitched for less protectionism in developing countries, saying that when the developed countries were criticised for raising protectionist trade barriers—allowing goods into their countries only selectively—they usually turn around and say "Look who's talking of protectionism." And with some justification, because the Third World still remains a closeted group. The World Bank would be negotiating for lowering of barriers in both developed and developing countries under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in its forthcoming talks.

During his six day visit, the World Bank president met the Prime Minister, the finance minister, the agriculture minister, the industry minister and the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. He also visited a number of projects financed by the World Bank in Uttar Pradesh.

Hardev Singh, New Delhi

India's Debt Crunch (1985-86)

(Rs crores)

Total foreign indebtedness	24 762
Debt repayment liability	1,438
Interest payment liability	1 405

COMMODITIES

Tea Exports Made Easy

The controversial minimum export price is abolished

New Delhi's decision to abolish the minimum export price announced on 10 August has been warmly welcomed by the tea industry. And predictably, the union finance and commerce minister, V P Singh, has been praised for his pragmatic approach. "The competitive position of Indian tea exporters has improved following this abolition," confirmed Harish J Shah, president of the Tea Exporters Association based in Calcutta. But it is nevertheless relevant to point out that this scheme has been with drawn only after doing considerable harm to the prospects of this major agro industry which contributes about Rs 1,600 crores annually to the gross national product, employs over a million workers and earns about Rs 700 crores yearly in foreign exchange through exports.

When the scheme to peg a minimum export price was first introduced earlier this year the industry had pointed out that it was likely to adversely affect exports, particularly exports to countries buying cheaper non quality tea. For instance the Calcutta based J Thomas & Co Pvt Ltd—the world's largest and oldest tea auctioneers and brokers—in their Tea Market Annual Report for 1984 warned that such markets could be "permanently lost" as they could find alternative sources of supply

"While this scheme may be justified in the short term," said the report, "any protracted use of such direct controls on international transactions can only prove counter productive."

That these fears were proved well founded is also evident from the presidential speech of N K Daga at the 27th annual general meeting of the Tea Association of India held in Calcutta on 3 August and inaugurated by President Zail Singh. Daga said that the fixation of a minimum export price had "greatly hampered exports of Indian tea, especially the common and plainer varieties to Sudan, Egypt, Afghanistan and even to North America" and that its continuance was causing 'serious impediments' in selling to India's traditional buyers.

Now that the government has indeed been persuaded to veer around to the industry's point of view, the ball is once again in the latter's court. Without further ado the tea industry will have to roll up its sleeves and step up exports particularly of value added items such as packet tea, tea bags and instant tea. It must also give greater attention to the task of developing new markets in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world where there is still good

scope for raising per capita tea consumption.

Meanwhile the government on its part should continue to pursue realistic policies so as to enable the nation's 13,428 gardens to produce adequate tea both for the domestic market and for exports. It is estimated that the industry will need an investment of about Rs 900 crores to raise production to 766 million kg by 1989, of which 509 million kg will be for home consumption and 257 million kg for exports. Where will this money come from? Obviously, now that the two year old price boom in tea is fast fading out, the taxation and credit policies of the union government must be so oriented as to help the industry to earn more profits and plough the same back into garden development.

Tea consumption within the country has been sharply rising and this trend is likely to persist in the coming years. Domestic retention during 1984 was 430 million kgs, an increase of 12.9 per cent as compared to 381 million kgs in 1983. With the availability of more sugar at fair prices, the domestic demand for tea is likely to get a strong fillip. Incidentally sugar consumption in India increased from 46.65 lakh tonnes in 1980-81 to 75.38 lakh tonnes in 1983-84, a rise of almost 50 per cent in three years. The correlation between tea and sugar is clear.

With the abolition of the minimum tea export price, one major worry which had been nagging the industry lately is now over. The government has done its bit. Now it is the turn of the industry to show its performance.

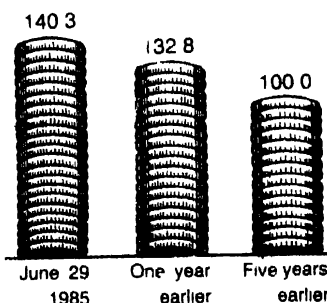
R.J. Venkateswaran, Calcutta

SHARES / TOP TEN

	1985		Open market quote on Aug 26
	High	Low	Rs
Bata India	88.10	40.00	67.75
Birla Jute	88.75	51.50	82.00
Calcutta Electric	25.25	11.80	21.50
EI Hotels	53.00	25.25	50.50
Hindustan Motors	85.50	31.81	73.50
India Steamship	20.75	8.80	12.70
Jayshree Tea	79.00	60.40	68.00
Metal Box	24.75	16.10	21.00
Orient Paper	88.00	54.00	81.50
Usha Martin	55.25	23.50	45.50

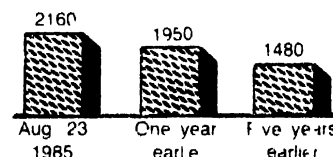
Note: The most actively traded shares last week

DEARNESS LEVEL

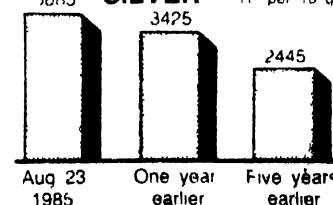


Note: Based on wholesale prices of selected essentials

GOLD (in Rs per 10 gms)



SILVER (in Rs per 10 gms)



Note: Bombay Bullion Association Ltd

Chart by Nilratan Marly

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Pakistan Flag on the Sher-e-Kashmir's Grave

Anti-national elements thrive under the rule of G. M. Shah

On 14 August, Pakistan's independence day, a group of marauders hoisted the Pakistan flag on the grave of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. For three days after that anti-national demonstrations disrupted normal life in the Valley. It was an insult to the memory of a man who had stood against the two-nation theory and fought for the accession of Kashmir to Hindu-majority India. Such an outrage was inconceivable in the regime of the former chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah whom the centre had blamed for 'encouraging secessionists.' It was clear evidence, instead, of the free hand anti-national elements have been given under the rule of the present chief minister G. M. Shah.

The incident shocked all those who stood by Sheikh Abdullah's principle of secularism and ashamed the members of the state Assembly. No explanation was given as to how the incident took place. The leader of the Congress(I) Legislature Party, Maulvi Iftekhhar Hussain Ansari, predictably, blamed Dr Abdullah, as is his party's wont.

Confident about his future, G. M. Shah left for Saudi Arabia on a Haj pilgrimage in the beginning of August. At the time of his departure, he did not appear too concerned about the prospect of political uncertainty in the state, since the Congress(I) high command had assured him its support. But his boast about having crushed anti-national forces in the state has been proved false. For days after the 14 August incident, life in many areas of the Valley was paralysed by demonstrators parading the streets, shouting anti-Indian and pro-Pakistan slogans. The administration, looked the other way. Apparently, the centre is very concerned about the rising tide of secessionism in the sensitive border state and Congress(I) MPs expressed concern over the incidents in the Lok Sabha. Even G. M. Shah's own allies in Kashmir are now feeling uneasy after the developments.

The independence days of Pakistan and India, 14 and 15 August, had seen large-scale violence and anti-

national demonstrations last year. This year, despite the heavy police bandobast and preventive arrests, the violence was repeated. In the morning of 14 August, police had to go around Srinagar and almost all other north-western towns of the Valley to remove Pakistani flags that had been hoisted atop electric and telegraph poles and housetops. That

The late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who opposed the two-nation theory: an insult to his memory



was not all. Students took to the streets, raising slogans in support of Pakistan and its President Zia-ul-Haq and put up Pakistani flags wherever they could. When the police intervened, they were stoned. Several buildings were illuminated, including structures in the Kashmir university campus overlooking the Dal Lake. During the day, the university students performed a ceremonial parade, with student leaders taking the 'salute.' It was after this that a group of them went to put up a flag on the Sheikh's grave. Incidentally, the police guard on duty in the area is said to have looked on mutely as the students committed the outrage. Similar parades celebrating the independence of Pakistan were held in other educational institutions.

But worse was to follow on 15 August, when parts of the old city witnessed pitched battles between securitymen and anti-national elements. The police resorted to lathi-charges, tear gas and firing. Over 200 were injured in the violence over three days. Some areas were rocked by powerful blasts. A petrol bomb hurled at an army vehicle narrowly missed its target. A few anti-national organisations had also given a call to observe 15 August as a 'black day.' They put up posters and distributed cyclostyled sheets with anti-Indian slogans and messages. And though the police did not lose time in seizing the posters and pamphlets, the literature had its effect.

The Panthers Party president Bhim Singh raised the issue in the state Assembly's budget session three days later and blamed the state government for encouraging anti-national and secessionist forces in the state. Members of the ruling party, in an attempt to shout him down, protested that the question was not "serious" enough. In the angry exchanges that followed, Bhim Singh and two of his colleagues, Mammed Shaffi and Piyare Lal Handoo, were suspended from the Assembly for the rest of the budget session for having "disrupted" the proceedings. Mr Singh was bodily removed from the House by the marshals. The shouting of slogans and abuses, and scuffles between members finally led to the adjournment of the House for the day.

Meanwhile, some members have challenged the suspension of the House in the Srinagar High Court. The court has asked the speaker to provide it with records of the day's proceedings.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

KERALA

A Fragile Unity

Kerala Congress threatens to pull out of UDF

The Kerala chief minister K Karunakaran seems to be caught between the devil and the deep sea when the Kerala Congress, an important constituent of the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) threatened to pull out of the front unless its member K Balkrishna Pillai, the state's former electricity minister, was reinducted into the cabinet.

In June this year, it looked as if the ruling UDF would break up when Mr Pillai caused much embarrassment to Mr Karunakaran by declaring that a "Punjab type" agitation was necessary in Kerala to solve the state's problems. This raised a hue and cry, and it appeared as if the CM would be forced to drop Pillai from his ministry even if it antagonised the Kerala Congress whose participation is vital for the survival of the UDF ministry. The crisis was, however, averted when Justice Radhakrishna Menon while admitting a writ petition against Mr Pillai's "unconstitutional utterances" submitted by a Congress activist, remarked that it would be in keeping with the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy if he stepped down while the petition was being heard. Mr Pillai did step down, without the CM having to take any "unpleasant step".

However, after two months on 19 August, as soon as the case was dismissed, the Kerala Congress demanded the immediate induction of Mr Pillai into the cabinet. Matters became so serious that the CM had to rush to Delhi for consultations with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I) leadership about the political crisis in the state. The High Court, while dismissing the case, observed that it was the responsibility of the Governor or the chief minister to find out if Mr Pillai had violated his oath of office and decide if he should be reinducted into the cabinet (according to Article 220 of the Constitution, the court cannot interfere in such matters). The CM thus was forced to shoulder all the responsibility.

The Congress(I) is already facing a formidable "partner" in its ministry in the form of the United Muslim League which has now become the second-largest party in the front after the Congress(I) with 18 MLAs, the Kerala Congress has 15 members. That leaves the UDF with 79 members against the opposition Left

Front's 60 in the 141 member Assembly. The ruling front can hardly afford to break up its ties with the Kerala Congress. And, at the same time, the Congress(I) cannot afford to tarnish its image by encouraging controversial figures like Mr Pillai, in view of future elections when it will have to face a stiff challenge from the communists as well as the Muslim League.

The fact that the Congress(I) is on the defensive as far as Kerala politics

is concerned was evident when on 21 July the CM said that any party including the All India Muslim League (which had just then ended its alliance with the CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front) would be accommodated in the UDF if the partners agreed to it. According to political observers, when the CM told reporters that it was the policy of the UDF to bring all democratic forces under one banner, he certainly had something more in mind.

Politics in Kerala has today given almost every single party a chance to play a decisive role. While the Congress(I) is skating on thin ice, every one else seems to be consolidating their positions.

A Special Correspondent, Trivandrum

Unrest at Kanyakumari

Communal harmony in the south tip of the country was shattered on 19 August following the outbreak of violence between Christian fishermen and the RSS in the coastal region around the Kerala Tamil Nadu border. Two people were shot dead and about five people were seriously injured when the trigger happy Tamil Nadu Police aimed their guns at a crowd of fishermen without giving any warning. People belonging to all the communities in the area told SUNDAY that it was the juvenile reaction of the police that aggravated the situation. Even at the height of tension this correspondent saw that the only group of policemen present there were relaxing.

This outbreak of violence comes after nearly two years of the first communal clash in the Kanyakumari district when more than 15 people were killed in police firing during the Mandakavvu temple festival. People from all communities lived there in harmony for nearly a year before a minor scuffle between two men in Kollamcode, ten kilometres from the Kerala Tamil Nadu border, developed into a communal clash.

The Christian fishermen are a very sensitive group of people. As soon as rumours about the scuffle spread, fishermen from other coastal regions of Kerala rushed to Kollamcode. Three priests of the Catholic parishes of the area were also there, trying to pacify the fishermen. The inspector general of Tamil Nadu police claimed that but for the timely action of the police there would have been more vio-

lence. However, a magisterial enquiry has been ordered into the firing. Some elder people from the area told SUNDAY that there was no reason for any violence and that all communities had been living peacefully for quite some time. Such a situation, they said, can be caused only by someone who would take advantage by inciting violence.

A RSS worker said that pictures of Jesus Christ on the cross were being put up near temples. At the same time leaders of the fishermen claimed it was the RSS leader Manikantan Nair who first caused the scuffle to take place between the fishermen by inciting one of them. It was only after this that a fisherwoman was attacked, rumours spread and antisocial elements took over. The head of the headmaster of the local school, Mr V. J. ... was attacked.

It is when a mob of about 500 fishermen reach a house that the police opened fire. Till the time of filing this report the police have not shown any interest in apprehending the mischief makers. Communal interaction marked by years of friendship is being violated by vested interests. The fishermen have hired generators and put up tube lights in the interior areas to prevent attacks at night. But with communal elements having a free run in the area and with temples and churches converted into "defence chambers," how long will harmony prevail? Mercifully there are still those who are guided by the spirit of harmony.

SUNDAY 19th August 1985

FOREIGN TRADE

Exporting Methods

Export Inspection Council to share expertise with foreigners

The Indian practice of inspection of all exported goods through weights and measures seems to have at last found appreciation abroad. While India was the second country, after Japan, to introduce compulsory inspection of export commodities after passing the Export (Quality and Control and Inspection) Act 1963, she is now being approached by other countries for sharing expertise on stringent quality control.

Officials of the export inspection council (EIC) which is the premier inspection agency for exports, were surprised when they received a request from the Chinese government to start a training programme for commodity inspection. The People's Republic of China had promulgated in January 1984, regulations for 100 per cent inspection of import and export commodities and immediately looked towards India to learn the science of quality inspection. "We were hesitant at first, to begin the Chinese experiment, but when their study team visited our inspection centres we realised that they simply wanted to learn the methodology of inspection and rejection," said Dula Chandra Mazumdar,

director, inspection and quality control, EIC.

The high standard of export inspection in India has received recognition from other quarters as well. This year, the International Trade Centre (ITC) in Geneva, requested the EIC secretariat to organise training programmes for delegates from Vietnam and Afghanistan. Representatives of both the countries made a survey of inspection training facilities. Very soon the government is to set up a regular exchange programme with these countries and others who have shown similar interest in India's compulsory inspection of exports.

While, Japan, from whom India borrowed heavily to learn the art of quality precision, has denotified a large number of items from the earlier 100 per cent export inspection in India. 38 per cent of all goods (worth Rs 3,000 crores) are still under inspection regulations of the EIC. This covers 627 broad categories of exportable commodities. The goods which go through stringent inspection before they can leave the Indian shores are: engineering goods which

account for 432 units, chemical and allied products (71 units), footwear and footwear components (32 units), jute and jute products (61 units) and fish and fish products (31 units). More exportable units are being denotified by the government from time to time as their standards are meeting the requirement. All the same, the percentage of goods which come under the purview of mandatory inspection has increased as a result of fresh items being added in order to achieve quality perfection in all areas of exports.

According to the director, achieving the target of 100 per cent acceptance of consignments exported, is still a far cry. Though the percentage of rejection has declined, some exporters and small entrepreneurs persist in sending substandard goods for inspection resulting in a colossal national waste. The reason why the EIC has come in for strong criticism from exporters is that it has started prosecuting those exporters who were violating the rules of quality control. At present, the council is contesting 12 cases against various companies whose goods were found wanting in mandatory quality requirements. Among them are Hindustan Levers for a consignment of footwear which was rejected, and four large jute companies of Calcutta. In all, of 55,161 consignments of exportable goods which the EIC inspected between January and June this year, 4,359 consignments were declared to be faulty, which means, 7.9 per cent were rejected. Last year, during the same period there was a 13 per cent rejection of goods—a healthy trend—which speaks for the improving standards of Indian exports.

With the interest shown by China, Vietnam and Afghanistan and other representations received from Bangladesh and the Philippines, inspection of exportable goods is expected to gain further impetus. The government with the EIC and its counterpart the Indian Standards Institute (ISI), is considering the establishment of a training centre where programming and training of inspectors from other developing countries could be started. The Planning Commission has already approved a project for setting up a pilot test house for the EIC at a cost of Rs 2.37 crores. The pilot test establishment, the finest in the world, would further strengthen the progress made in the direction of standard export goods. The aim should be to perfect the quality of all exportable goods since they sell the image of a progressive and industrialised nation.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi



A Chinese delegation at the EIC office

GUJARAT

Minister versus Bureaucrat

A collector's transfer raises an outcry

"You have made a hero out of him," said Vallabhbhai Patel, the 62-year-old health minister of Gujarat, referring to the collector of Rajkot, D. K. Sikri who had ordered the detention of Popatbhai Patel, an industrialist, on 30 July for illegally encroaching upon 10,000 sq metres of municipal land. The detention was ordered under the newly-adopted Anti-Goondism Act which gives the government the power to detain undesirable people in the interest of public law and order.

Soon afterwards, however, the health minister intervened and with

major chasm between the ministry and the civil service in the state and the IAS officers' association sent a deputation headed by additional chief secretary H. K. Khan to express resentment against the manner in which the minister had made the allegations.

Popatbhai Patel is a leading diesel engine manufacturer in the country; his firm has a turnover of around Rs 16 crores. He is, however, not the only one to have been accused of encroaching upon municipal land. About 40 major industrialists have taken over 30,000 sq metres of land

industrialists wanted the land to be priced at Rs 100 per sq metre. The officials felt that the price was too low. Then, the BJP controlled municipal corporation suggested a price, but even that was rejected by government officials for the same reason.

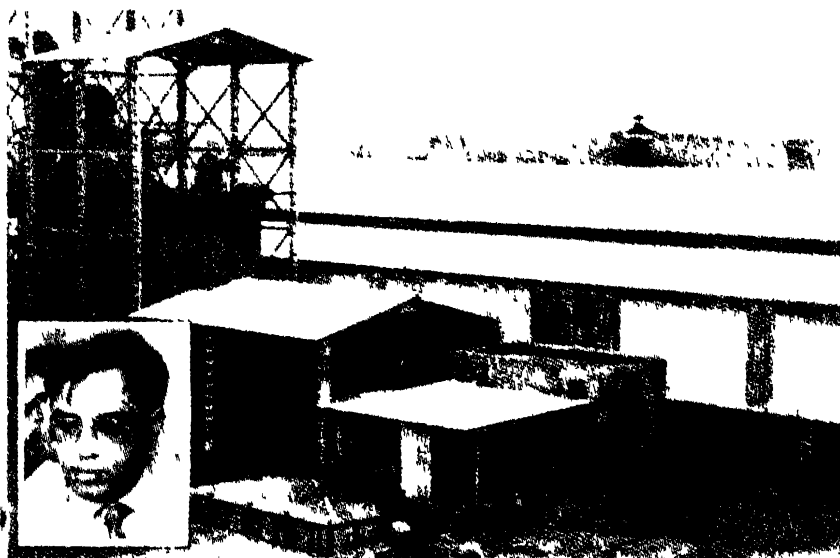
In July, a Bill was passed in the state Legislature which aimed at giving the government the power to detain people endangering the law and order situation. Among those who could be arrested under the Act were land grabbers. The chief minister had promised in the Assembly that only the habitual offenders would be prosecuted and some land-grabbers were detained in Surat though they were let off later. Popatbhai Patel's detention led to an uproar among the Patels in the ruling party and in the opposition.

According to the supporters of former chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki, Popatbhai Patel's release, is an attempt by the government to woo the powerful Patel lobby. The Solanki lobby feels that the new ministry is trying to strengthen the Patels in place of the kshatriyas whom the Solanki government had wooed. The Solanki government had especially favoured the kshatriyas, the harijans, the Muslims and the adivasis (the famous KHAM lobby) but it is believed that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is not in favour of alienating any section of the people from the Congress(I).

Mr Sikri, the collector, who has been an IAS officer for the last ten years, has now been shifted to New Delhi on deputation to the union government. The transfer order came just when the controversy over his action was at its peak. The state government, however, claimed that the transfer had nothing to do with the orders Sikri had issued. The government also publicly declared that it has full faith in its IAS officers and it was keen to ensure that their integrity was not questioned except through proper channels.

It is believed that the chief minister had chided Vallabhbhai Patel for claiming that Sikri's act was an act of revenge. He has also assured Sikri that the government had confidence in his ability. Meanwhile, the Congress(I) dissident leader Jinabhai Darji had brought the incident to the notice of the Prime Minister. In fact, after the incident, a number of industrialists in Rajkot have decided to surrender the plots of land they had encroached upon to the civic authorities. They have already met the municipal commissioner C.J. Jose regarding the surrender of their plots.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad



A factory built on illegally acquired land and (inset) D.K. Sikri

the chief minister Amarsinh Choudhary's help had Popatbhai Patel released, within 24 hours of his arrest. This led to strong criticism against the one-month old Amarsinh Choudhary government. What made the situation even more embarrassing for the CM were Vallabhbhai Patel's statements. "Officers are not sons of God. Newspapers have made the Rajkot collector a hero. Do you know why he ordered Popatbhai's arrest?" asked Vallabhbhai. "He did it because Popatbhai had not agreed to give distribution rights for his diesel oil engines for Punjab to a friend of the collector's," he added. When asked how he could make such charges, the minister brushed aside the question stating that he had already written to the chief minister demanding an inquiry.

The charge was immediately refuted by Mr Sikri. It has also led to a

in the AJI industrial area in the city either to expand their units or to prevent the land around their units being occupied by slum-dwellers. According to Vajubhai Vala, the mayor of Rajkot and a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), altogether 48 new slums where over one lakh people live, have come up in the past few years (many of them on public land) and 28 have been regularised by the authorities. Industrialists claim that slums have come up in the AJI industrial zone and in order to prompt the setting up of slums, they encroached upon municipal land putting up boundary walls or even setting up factories in the area.

The industrialists claim that they have been writing to the corporation asking for the sale of land at a fair price. Two years ago, there had been a move to sell the plots but while the

INTER-STATE DISPUTES

The Battle for Belgaum

Dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka continues

The tug-of-war between Karnataka and Maharashtra over Belgaum has been continuing for three decades and yet there is no sign of either side letting up. But quite often, the issue hots up, disturbing the status quo and breaking the silence. Recently, political leaders from Maharashtra made a concerted effort to reopen the issue. The inspiration apparently came after the accord between the union government and the Akali Dal giving Punjab the sole possession of Chandigarh. Leaders of the Belgaum-based Maharashtra Ekikatan Samiti (MES), a political party with the aim to merge Belgaum with Maharashtra, brought together Marathi-speaking politicians of various shades in New Delhi.

The effort would have gone unnoticed but for the timing of the meeting, the initiative being taken soon after the Punjab accord was signed and while the Assam accord was being negotiated. Secondly, politicians of all parties in Maharashtra closed ranks and demanded that the centre should reconsider the Belgaum issue. And if the latest manoeuvres attracted attention, it was quite easy to figure out why. The government already facing problems in Punjab, Assam and Gujarat, now has something more to deal with.

The Belgaum issue has been simmering for almost 30 years, but over the last few years it had slid into the background in the face of greater problems. Last fortnight, however, a joint delegation from Maharashtra, comprising among others N.G. Gogay, former MP and envoy, Madhu Dandavate, Janata Party leader, and N.K.P. Salve, deputy leader of the Congress(I) in the Rajya Sabha, met the Prime Minister and urged for a solution to the long-standing dispute. The members of the delegation later said that "the Prime Minister spoke freely and showed an attitude of understanding the issue and a desire to resolve it," in sharp contrast to the standard, "We will look into it" reply given to previous delegations. The Prime Minister is also reported to have said that after studying the issue in detail and discussing the matter with the Karnataka chief minister, he would call the delegation for another discussion, and perhaps even appoint a judge to look into it.

The next day, chief minister Ramakrishna Hegde wrote an angry letter to the Prime Minister, a copy of which was read in the state Assembly to pacify the agitated members. Expressing shock at reports that said the Prime Minister indicated he would refer the matter to a judge, Mr Hegde said: "...For heaven's sake do not give the impression that the matter has not been finally decided. The only thing the union government is duty-bound to do is to implement the Mahajan Committee report in toto." Opinion was unanimous in the



(FROM LEFT) N.G. Gogay and N.K.P. Salve: united for Maharashtra

house that Karnataka would settle for nothing less than implementation of the Mahajan report which states that Belgaum should remain in Karnataka and suggests a minor territorial exchange.

The reaction was predictable. Every time the Belgaum issue has been brought up by Maharashtra, Karnataka has clung steadfastly to the Mahajan Committee report. The state has also pointed out, that in spite of Karnataka's opposition it was at the insistence of Maharashtra that the

Mahajan Committee was appointed to look into the border dispute. Maharashtra had also promised that it would abide by the decision of the committee which ultimately said Belgaum should remain in Karnataka. Relating personal incidents, Hegde said: "I remember that when the committee was appointed, the late Y.B. Chavan had held my hand in his and promised that the decision would be final and binding on both parties." Another Maharashtra chief minister V.P. Naik had also promised that Maharashtra would abide by the decision.

However, the joint delegation from Maharashtra argued before the Prime Minister that the Mahajan Committee awarded Belgaum to Karnataka when there were no proper terms of reference, especially the linguistic factor (Belgaum indisputably has a majority Marathi-speaking population) and that only "an extraneous issue like administrative convenience was taken into account." But in Bangalore, the Karnataka politicians were adamant that the issue was settled. Said G. Narayan Kumar, a pro-Kannada legislator: "It is either status quo or the Mahajan report. We won't settle for anything else."

Though it is possible that the latest round of rhetoric and rage will be typically shortlived, the implications cannot be wished away. As it was proved in Punjab, politicians are adept at creating explosive situations. Since 1957, the MES has won five seats to the Karnataka Assembly from Belgaum only by raising the merger issue. And the only way the MES can survive is by keeping alive the merger issue. In fact, as one observer pointed out: "If ever Belgaum merges with Maharashtra, it will be goodbye to politics for them. So I suppose, they must be hoping this problem will continue"

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

BOMBAY

Searches and Seizures

Raids on tax evaders are successful

A young collegian is the only person to be prosecuted in recent years by the Income Tax (I & T) department, Bombay, which has over the last few years, unearthed black money and tax frauds totalling crores of rupees. The college student convicted under the Indian Penal Code for impersonating an assessee had to pay a fine of Rs 20,000 and was given a day's simple imprisonment as she

was to be married very soon.

The girl had opened a bank locker in another name and a large amount of jewellery of an assessee who was to be raided was transferred to her locker since the assessee was trying to dodge tax officials. The tax sleuths received the information and caught the girl who after much interrogation and enquiry finally confessed. It seems easier for the tax authorities

to catch a young girl than the powerful 'money-bags' who are neither afraid of tax laws nor lawcourts. The assessee whom the young lady was an accomplice of, is "being investigated" and this could take years like every other case in the metropolitan magistrate's court.

In the last four years, over 1,000 complaints have been filed in the courts and not one assessee has been convicted. Last year alone, according to the new prosecution wing of the income tax department, Bombay, 633 complaints were filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, like wealth tax, not filing returns, filing late returns, concealing of income, false declarations, falsification of books of accounts and wrong statements.

Assessees who have plenty of black money, have been taking adjournment after adjournment, indulging in delaying tactics and making it more difficult for the tax sleuths doing the investigation to prove their case. "We have to prove offence beyond reasonable doubt. The onus is on us to prove the offence," says a spokesman of the income tax department.

To prove the offence, says the

department spokesman, the union minister of state for finance Janardhan Poojary has been talking about setting up special courts since April 1985. But these courts have still to become a reality. In Bombay, according to the prosecuting wing, the IT chief commissioner is consulting the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and the state government regarding setting up of special courts to try income tax cases. The Chief Justice will have to give his approval, allot a judge and constitute the court. Comprehensive legislation will also have to be framed by the centre. "Justice will be speedier under the special courts," the department officials told SUNDAY.

Meanwhile, in keeping with the union finance minister's efforts to collect resources in order to wipe out the budgetary deficit of Rs 3,349 crores, the intelligence wing of the income-tax department has been after suspected tax evaders. Incentives are also being provided to officers who unearth black money. According to the chief income-tax commissioner M.A. Twigg, between April and July 1985 search and seizure operations netted black money jewellery, cash and assets worth Rs 6.92 crores as

against Rs 1.18 crores for the corresponding period last year.

In June, a woman who has been working as an agent for labourers going to the Gulf and has even gone into film making was found to have been taking between Rs 5,000 and Rs 25,000 per person and not declaring this income. Taxmen found unaccounted assets worth Rs 20 lakhs in her premises. According to taxmen, she had earned over Rs three crores in the last few years.

On 19 June, a raid on a customs house agent revealed that the assessee had concealed income to the tune of Rs 51 lakhs, Rs 30 lakhs and Rs 22 lakhs for the years 1984-1985, 1983-1984 and 1982-1983, respectively. Bogus books of accounts in the names of concerns, in which expenses were debited were found and later, these amounts were withdrawn in cash or transferred into other books of accounts or fixed deposit receipts. Such unaccounted receipts worth Rs 30 lakhs and fixed deposits and saving bank accounts worth Rs 25 lakhs have been frozen and jewellery worth Rs 29.40 lakhs have also been seized.

Olga Telle, Bombay

HUMAN RIGHTS

Of Human Bondage

Women prisoners are illegally detained in West Bengal jails

"I don't want to stay here. The durwans make dirty proposals to me. When I told them that I would report to the authorities, they threatened me. If they come to know that I have written to you, they will beat me up. If you don't help me, I'll run away." So ran a letter written by an inmate of the West Bengal government-run Liluah Rescue Home for Women, Jyotsna Mistry, to advocate Shib Shankar Chakravarty of the Alipore Court in Calcutta.

Jyotsna Mistry, a young girl of 15 today, has spent the last seven years of her life in jail. She is one of the many unsuspecting girls who are lost, lured, kidnapped or brought to the cities from the villages with false promises of a better life, better jobs or even marriage. While many fall prey to flesh-traders, others are just abandoned. Eventually, they land in police custody. It is then that their woes start, for, the Presidency jail, where most of them are kept, till their relatives are traced out, is a world of torture and inhumanity. If no relatives are found, which is usually the case, the young girls are

sent to protective homes, where conditions are no less worse than the prisons. Justice Jyotirindranath Hore of the district and sessions court, Alipore, recorded his disgust: "I have visited different jails and



Women in Presidency jail: behind bars for no crime

found that none of them are suitable for rehabilitation of these women (who had been kept in Presidency jail or the Liluah Home)... The task is to contact their parents, if any, or get in touch with private and public organisations and speed up the process of their rehabilitation."

Take the example of Jyotsna Mistry. She was lost somewhere in Calcutta when she was eight. Found by the police, Jyotsna Mistry was kept in police custody till she was produced for the first and only time in court. The judge ordered that she be kept in safe custody in Presidency jail. That marked the beginning of her life of misery. Along with other hardened female prisoners, she was housed in the filthy and grossly overcrowded wards of the jail. Jyotsna always suffered from skin diseases as she was hardly provided with clean clothes. In fact there were times when she had to sell her meagre quota of food to the jail staff to buy decent attire. Champa, another inmate, was exploited in yet another way. She had saved Rs 90 by working while in custody but when she was finally released she was handed Rs 10. To add to their miseries, these girls are hardly ever allowed to communicate their woes to the world outside. When Maya Barui, a rape victim, wanted to contact a lawyer, she was refused. Also, her letters written to

the district magistrate for help were intercepted. Moreover, though the jail manual clearly states that these girls should be produced in court once every fortnight, the rules are hardly followed. The girls are locked up and deliberately denied all legal help.

Nor are the jails safe for the girls. Said Archana Mondol: "On many of my sleepless nights I have seen some of the jail staff enter the women's non-criminal lunatic (NCL) ward stealthily..." Most women inmates, often complain of molestation. Gita Ganguly was raped by her escorts on her way back from court and ordered to keep quiet. But when she was found to be pregnant, secret arrangements were made for an abortion. Outside the jail too, the young girls are not free to talk of

their life in jail. When they are produced in court they are ordered not to disclose their living conditions to the judges. Medical facilities too are inadequate. According to a jail doctor, Presidency jail has just two doctors to look after the 2400-odd prisoners.

A few however, have been lucky. One such was Jyotsna Mistry who was released from Presidency jail. It was, in fact, a stroke of luck for her when Maya Barui, another inmate, mentioned her name along with those of other detainees in the jail. Both Jyotsna Mistry and Maya Barui got their release orders from Presidency jail only to find that their situation had not improved. Jyotsna Mistry had been shifted to the Liluah Home from where she had penned her letters of distress to advocate

Shib Shankar Chakravarty, who has been waging a lone battle on behalf of the young girls to secure their release from prison.

The figures supplied by the jail authorities and that given by Maya Barui regarding the number of women detainees in Presidency jail is contradictory. While the authorities claim that there are only 11 women detainees in Presidency jail, Maya Barui spoke of 23 women to the press. Though the recent furore in the press regarding these illegally detained women detainees has shaken the West Bengal government out of its slumber and efforts are underway to help the girls, much remains to be done to rehabilitate them.

Sumita Ghosh, Calcutta

GERMANY

Summer Wine

Doctored Austrian wine floods German market

Summer is usually a good time for Austrian wines in Germany when almost two-thirds of the wine exported from Austria are guzzled down by thirsty Germans. But this year Austrian vino, be it the fresh, fruity dry wines or the succulent sweet wines, are conspicuous by their absence. There was not a bottle to be bought, anywhere in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) for the last week of July and now, it would be hard to find one in Great Britain or Switzerland. Also, the United States has ordered wine importers and wholesalers to stop selling Austrian wines until they are tested thoroughly.

At the heart of the matter is the scandal of doctoring wine with a toxic anti-freeze chemical, diethylene glycol, which can cause ailments like a damaged kidney. This practice seems to have been widespread among the suppliers of Austrian wine to the FRG where several thousand bottles containing the chemical have been found. This week the Bonn health ministry has issued a new list of 250 Austrian wines which have been found contaminated. Previously it had been believed that only the wine belonging to the *qualitätsprädikat* or superior, had been doctored. In the meantime, carefree tourists in Austria are reported to be enjoying young vintages that are said to be free from contamination—ordering *ein viertel frostschutzmittel* (a quarter litre of antifreeze).

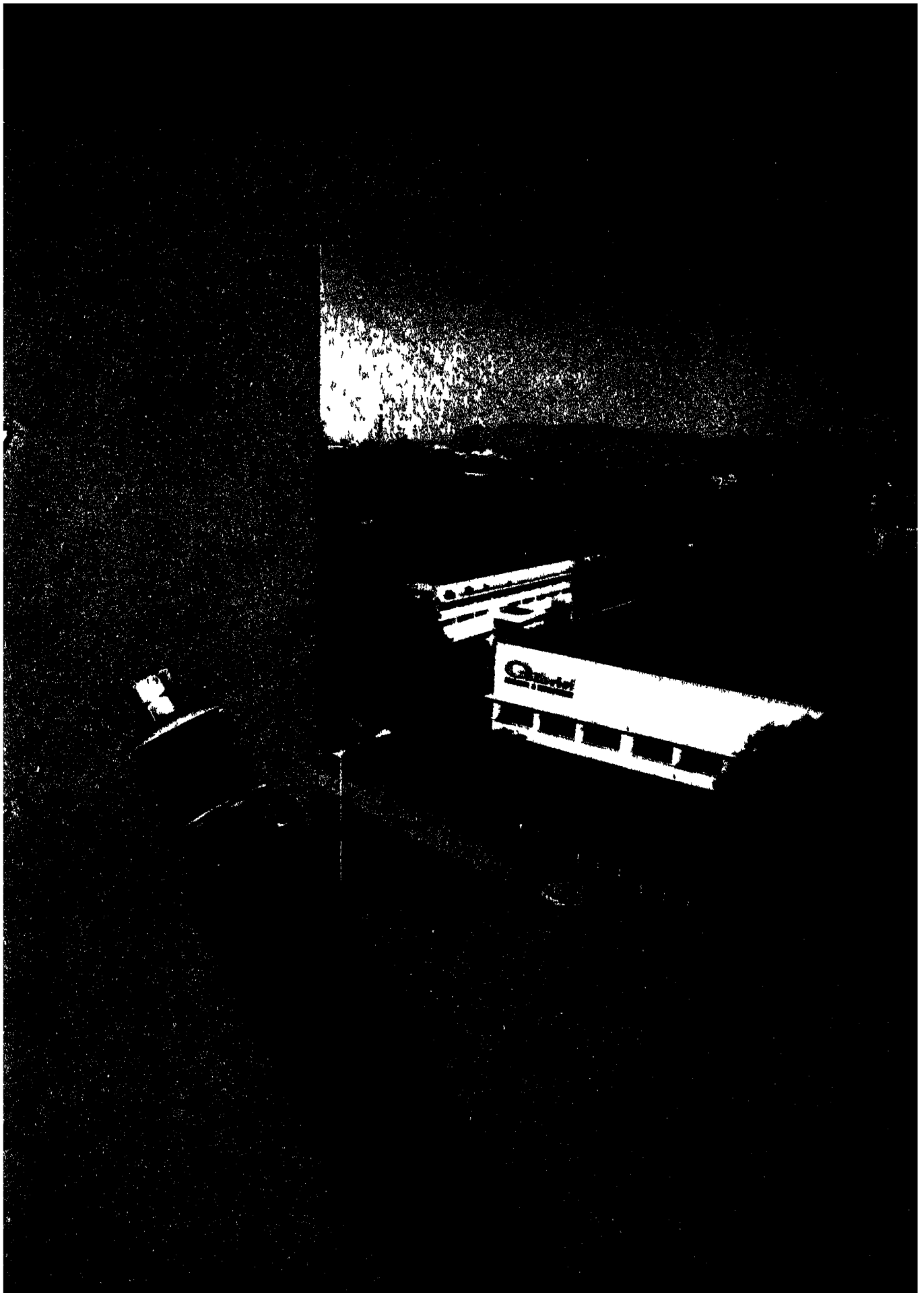
The general Austrian farmers union are trying hard to contain the damage. Officials of the union have journeyed to Bonn, accusing "a wine mafia of merchants with the backing of top politicians, of doctoring vintages to improve quality and profits." They have also launched a huge advertising campaign in the FRG papers aimed at offsetting the damage in the country which is by far the most important buyer of Austrian wines. But the health-conscious Germans are outraged by the scandal and trouble is brewing for the top official in the Rhineland's wine ministry, Herr Ferdinand Stark, who was told of the doctoring in late April but took over two months to make it public. German papers have attributed this silence to the strength of the wine lobby.

This scandal has rocked the £17 million Austrian wine export industry which had recently built up a reputation as a reliable source of good wine at fair prices. German wine *aficionados* were particularly fond of the Austrian *eiswein*, which has a concentrated and very sweet taste, being made from frozen grapes, and is available at a cost much less than the home produced *eisweins*. It is not yet clear how the scandal came to light. One of the people who became suspicious when large quantities of good Austrian wine were being sold at a cheap price might have decided to investigate.

Another theory is that customs officials became suspicious and raised the alarm when a wine exporter asked for a tax refund on chemicals he had used in processing his wine. A key figure in the scandal is an unenterprising and unscrupulous chemist, Otto Nadraski. He is said to have discovered as early as 1976, that diethylene glycol boosts the sweetness and alcohol content of wine and unlike sugar it is difficult to trace. This meant that ordinary wines could be transformed into the most expensive categories of wine like *trockenbeerenauslese* which are normally reproduced by selected withered grapes. Nadraski is supposed to have sold his secret to one of Austria's biggest wine exporters, Herr Grill, who then produced large quantities of *trockenbeerenauslese* containing a potentially lethal 16 gm of glycol per litre. Both the men are now in prison and could face imprisonment upto ten years. Nadraski is alleged to have sold his recipe to several others so that the list of contaminated wines has kept on increasing. Indeed doctored Austrian wine of 1976 vintage have been found as far away as Japan.


This scandal is perhaps the first crack in the wall of malpractices in wine making. Investigations in the Federal Republic of Germany have resulted in the discovery of disinfectants in several bottles of Italian sparkling wine and, more seriously, diethylene glycol in four bottles of their own Rhine-Hessen wine. This is not the first time that wine has been laced, but previously what was added was crystal and liquid sweeteners whereas the recent scandal was about adding a chemical known to be harmful to the body.

Kanta Talukdar, Bonn





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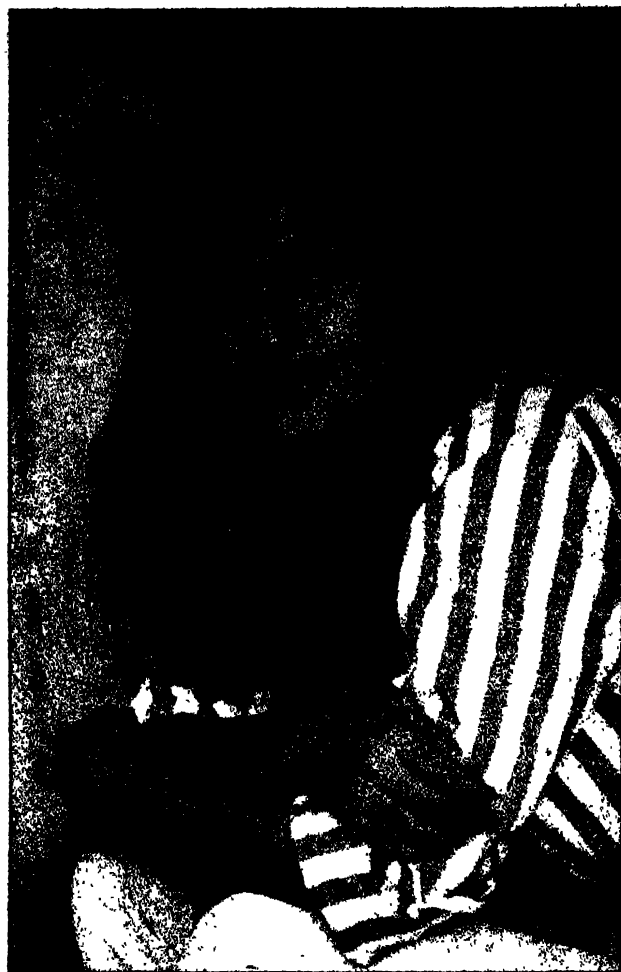


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MINOLTA Photophone AF-E

Five years ago, a producer called Kishore Sharma announced a big-budget film called *Chanakya Chandragupta*. It was to be directed by B.R. Chopra and Dilip Kumar and Dharmendra were to play the leading roles. The film was stated to be a very expensive one. In fact, thousands of rupees were spent on just a wig for Dilip, who was to portray Chanakya. That was all. Nothing new has been heard since. The grapevine has it that it may be revived. B.R. Chopra and Dilip Kumar are still in the film which may be an Indo-Soviet project, but Dharmendra is out. Amitabh Bachchan has been approached to play the role of Chandragupta, but he is yet to give his assent. He still has to go through the script.

Sarika is running into rough weather these days. No major offers are coming her way; producers apparently are shying away from her. She is being offered only sexy and revealing roles. It all started with that semi-nude scene she did in Jalal Agha's *Nirvaan*, which she still considers one of the best films of her career. "I don't know why people are only obsessed with my body...they (the producers) are even offering me fantastic terms to play the vamp but I am not willing to fall into that trap. Not so soon," says Sarika. She is now busy with *Shart*, *Qatl* and *Dilwala*, in which she plays "important, revealing roles." Sarika has also taken to TV serials "because the money is very good and it comes in time."



Sarika: can show her talent, too

Gautam Rajadhyaksha



Tina Munim: living without love?

Gautam Rajadhyaksha

Has the *Rajesh-Tina* affair broken up? It started when Tina walked into a party alone. This was rather unusual since Rajesh was in town that night and having a good time with his friends. The story goes that Rajesh, who was openly having an affair with Tina after *Dimple* walked out on him shifted into her bungalow while his own bungalow "Aashirvaad" was being renovated. Rajesh even started his own film, *Alag Alag*, with Tina as his leading lady. Then something went wrong and Rajesh left Tina's bungalow. He now lives in his office.

Kamalahasan's desperate bid to make a comeback under the arc-lights with the lead role in the Tamil film *Zoorintha Ullam*

failed. The film has all the ingredients required for a box-office hit: glittering sets, elaborate song sequences, a series of kissing scenes between Kamal and Ambika. Yet, it bombed at the box-office.

Nadia Moidu, who insists that she is not interested in a film career, is now being sought after by most Malayalam film producers. According to an insider, she is a "very level-headed and intelligent girl." No wonder she is demanding the same rates as Hindi film stars. Her first film, *Nokkethapurathu Kannum Nattu* has now been shot in Tamil and will be shot in Hindi too. Will Hindi filmdom have to contend with one more belle from the South?

Namaste, Pope

If all goes well, 1986 should be seeing Pope John Paul II conducting mass on Indian soil. The response, apparently, has been rather belated. The invitation was extended to him more than five years ago—in March 1980—by Simon Pimenta, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) and was renewed by Mrs Gandhi during her trip to the Vatican. During his week long stay in the country, the Pope is expected to meet the President, Prime Minister and address meetings of various religious and philanthropic groups.



Pope John Paul II

Masterpieces on TV

Authors who write in vernaculars have till now been deprived of media attention, unlike their counterparts who have won fame and money with their works in English. But Doordarshan's commercialisation has had at least one positive effect: that of bringing to the limelight the works of some of the best authors who write in their mother tongues. Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, (94) last year's Jnanpith award winner whose prowess in fiction writing was not known to many outside Karnataka, can now be re-

lished by all when Doordarshan televises his delightful short story *The Curd Seller*. Besides, efforts are now on to film his epic, *Chikkaveera Rajeendra*. Director M S Sathyu is already scouting for suitable locations in Coorg.

Masti, for whom recognition has come very late in life, might agree with the ode in the film *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. "If you had come today you could have reached a whole nation/Israel in 4 BC had no mass communication." But TV has come to his aid.

Rolling Around India

Promoting national unity through roller skating? Quaint idea perhaps but this is what Uriah Suku, a 29 year old sportsman from Calcutta is apparently aiming to do. He is soon to be off on an "around the country in 89 days" trip—on a pair of roller skates. Uriah, who has been skating since the tender age of 11, has a penchant for hard journeys. In 1978 he toured South India on an army disposed motorbike, covering about

8 000 miles. For his next adventure on roller skates he is planning to travel 8 503 kms in 89 days for which he is being egged on by the international



Uriah Suku, rolling on

skating coach, Prof. Aituro Grece, who has trained many a skating enthusiast in New Delhi.

Prof. Grece describes Uriah as one "who fights for something he believes in." But the young adventurer has no misgivings about his tour as he confidently says "As I am the first, it only gives me greater prowess and strength." As he rolls on to the remotest corners of India he will carry out studies on rural development and also distribute pamphlets for various social service organisations.



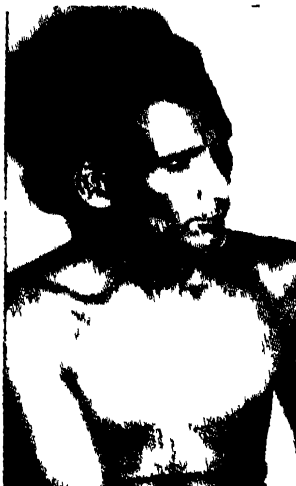
Rita Shukla, distinctive style

The Young Jnanpith-winner

Fiction is her mainstay. In Rita Shukla, who by profession is a teacher at the Mahila Mahavidyalaya in Ranchi, has been publishing her short stories in different publications from time to time. Though the turning point in her writing is still to come, she has every reason to be elated. She has won the Bharatiya Jnanpith title as the best young short story writer for her collection entitled *Kronchvadh* and she has more or less clinched her ticket to fame. The 35 year old author's forte is life in rural India and the author weaves a rich tapestry of characters, who lead simple lives in the rustic locales of rural India.

Sire Who Does Not Tire

The more the merrier. That seems to be the motto of Udayanath Dakshinaray who, at the age of 61, has as many as 89 wives. His target, at the moment, is 100—a feat which will be difficult to achieve. Once known to be the richest man in Urali village in Keonjhar district of Orissa, he is now insolvent with less than ten acres of land. However, this has not stopped parents of teenaged girls

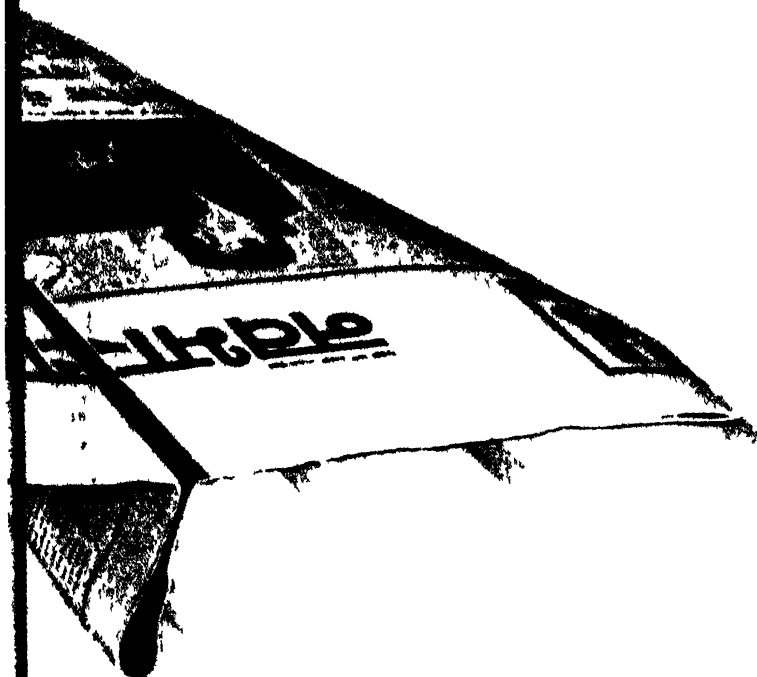


Dakshinaray: endless love

from offering their daughters hands in marriage to the sixty year old Dakshinaray. He is said to have supernatural powers and knows a bit of yoga and tantra. Today, he is left with only six wives. Among the 89 women—most of whom he married according to Vedic rites—57 have deserted him while 26 have died. Despite his numerous matrimonial exploits, he has only ten children—seven sons and three daughters—and for this low count of offspring, he boasts about knowing a "secret" of sex.

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Dhruva: Critical Despite Snags

6 August 1985. As the world mourned the 40th anniversary of Hiroshima, the countdown for commissioning India's largest research reactor began in Bombay. Scientists of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) turned on the pump that began filling heavy water inside the cavernous core of the Dhruva reactor that was being loaded with fuel: natural uranium. Then came the shock. A valve that should have closed automatically failed and the precious heavy water began to overflow. By the time scientists detected the failure, four tonnes of heavy water valued at Rs 15 million had been lost. "The spillage was not an accident but a pre-criticality hazard," said an embarrassed BARC spokesman. The incident was quickly forgotten as two days later scientists rejoiced when Dhruva became critical, 12 years after the project began and Rs 2,000 million having been spent.

Much of the spilled heavy water could be salvaged and purified but the incident was a warning to BARC which had been overanxious to commission Dhruva before fully testing the interlock systems and safety devices. If the valve had failed during normal operation the consequences

would have been worse. Sources say that BARC should have been extra cautious, particularly after a previous accident when one of Dhruva's coolant pumps imported from West Germany was totally damaged while it was being tested with ordinary water. The pipings which were supplied by the BARC workshop were not cleaned, and so the steel fillings inside the pipe were sucked into the pump, damaging its parts. In fact, a tussle is going on between the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the independent Nuclear Regulatory Board (NRB) responsible for safety of nuclear reactors. While the NRB has been insisting that it should approve Dhruva before commissioning, DAE maintains that the board's responsibility covers only power plants and not research reactors. To be fair, NRB has neither the expertise nor the manpower to carry out its functions, an argument used by DAE to justify the commissioning of Dhruva without waiting for the board's approval. Besides the coolant interlock that failed, there are three or four more similar systems in Dhruva that would have to be thoroughly tested before the reactor's power level could be safely raised to the maximum of 100 mw.

That deadline is likely to be many

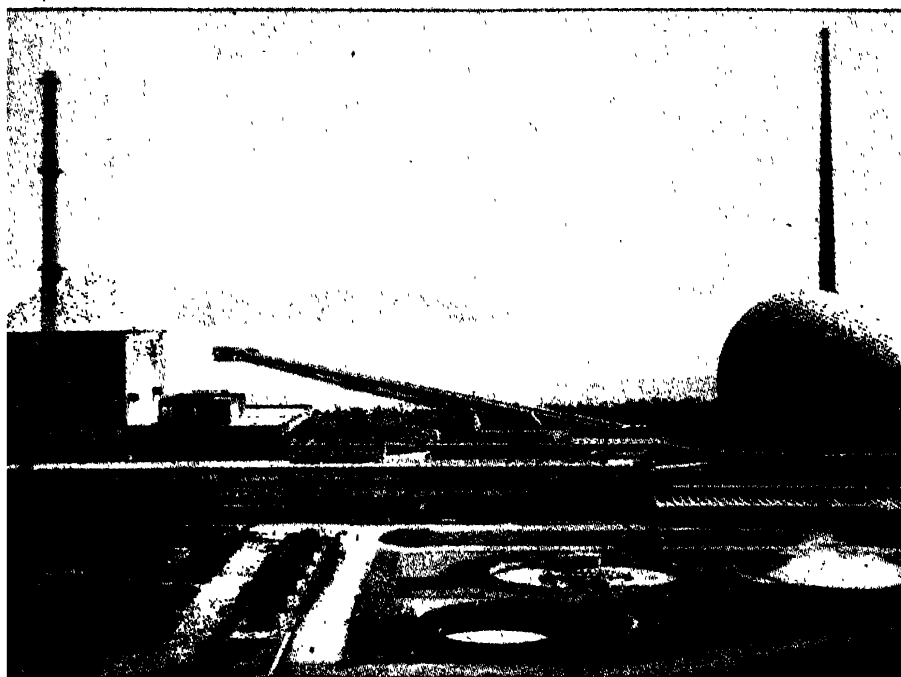
months away as Dhruva is plagued by a more serious problem: vibration of the fuel rods. BARC engineers say that the rods vibrate as coolant heavy water flows under pressure through the aluminium flow tube.

The vibrations can rupture the fuel rods and contaminate the coolant. "The reactor will never be able to reach higher power until this problem is solved," said one BARC expert. The fuel bundles were made in the Fuel Fabrication Plant in Trombay while all the power reactor fuel elements are made at the Nuclear Fuel Complex in Hyderabad.

Once Dhruva overcomes these problems and begins normal operations, hopefully, next year, BARC scientists will have a new and better facility for research. Being a research reactor, Dhruva will not produce electricity. The heat produced is extracted by coolant heavy water, passed on to ordinary water in a heat exchanger, and then the hot water is thrown into the sea. The only thing Dhruva will produce is a stream of particles called neutrons which is a basic tool for nuclear research, particularly in the study of solid state. At its peak operation of 100 mw, Dhruva will generate at the centre of its core 180 trillion (million times million) neutrons per square centimetre per second. Beam tubes surrounding the core will transport these neutrons through the reactor vault into the experimental area. Isotopes for medicine and agriculture can also be produced by loading the elements inside a tube and irradiating it inside the core.

Dhruva will be the largest among India's research reactors (India has five more) and about 2.5 times bigger than Cirus, the 25-year-old Canada-built reactor which will have to be decommissioned in five-to-seven years. But the emergence of Dhruva in India's nuclear sky comes at a time when research reactors are becoming out of fashion the world over. Most of the experiments that can be done with neutrons have already been done. The five or six reactors of the type of Dhruva operating elsewhere are primarily used for training. Accelerators are replacing reactors as source of isotopes and for nuclear research.

Dhruva will, however, be an additional source of plutonium, a material used in nuclear bomb. According



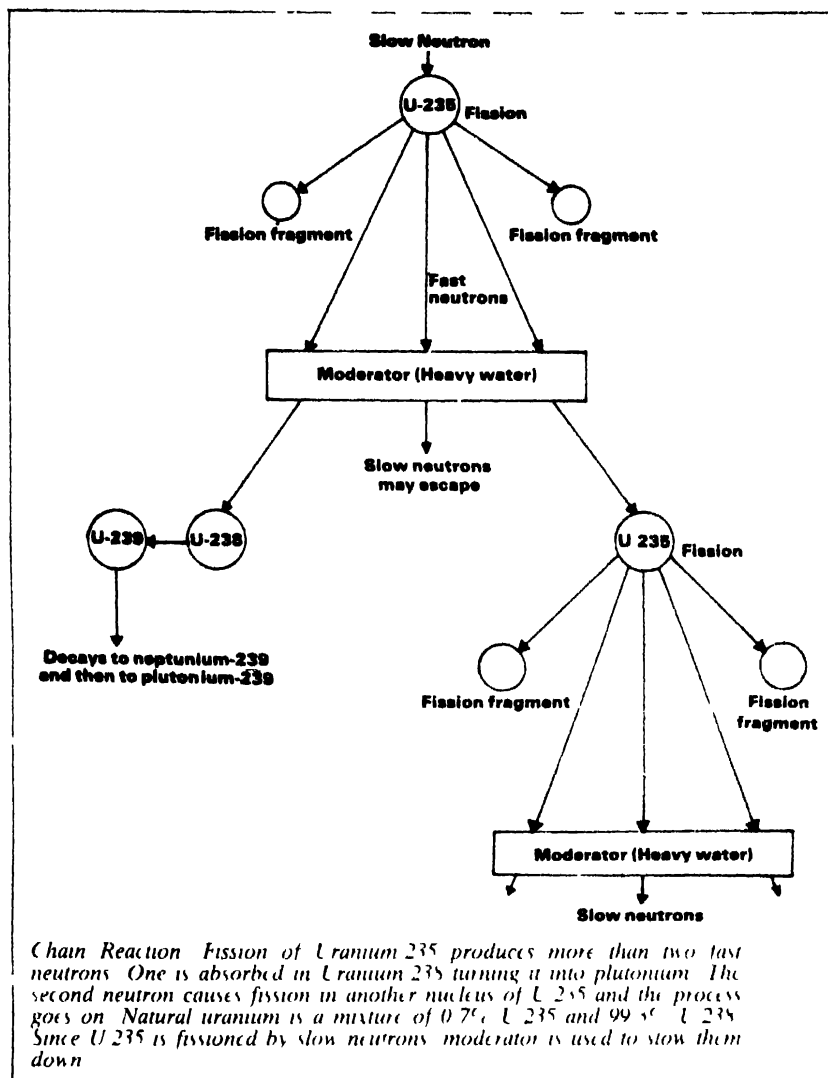
A view of the Dhruva research reactor (left) at the BARC

Chain Reaction, Critical Size, Criticality

A slowly moving neutron hitting a nucleus of Uranium-235 has a good chance of splitting it. Besides energy, the fission gives out on the average 2.5 neutrons as a bonus. These may escape from the reactor system, be absorbed by impurities and can get lost in many other ways. But at least one neutron must be available to cause fission in another nucleus so that a chain reaction can continue (see diagram).

This condition is conveniently expressed in terms of multiplication factor, denoted by the letter "K," which is defined as the ratio of the number of neutrons in any one generation to the number in the immediately preceding generation. If K is equal to or greater than one, the chain reaction will continue. If it is less than unity, even by a small amount, the chain cannot be maintained.

Take, for instance, a reactor system with multiplication factor one. If a particular generation starts with 100 neutrons there will be again 100 neutrons at the beginning of the second generation. The number of neutrons will be the same even after 100 generations. If K is less than unity, say 0.95, the number of neutrons will decrease to 95 in the second generation. Only one will be left at the beginning of the 93rd generation and so the chain reaction will stop. On the other hand, if a system has K greater than unity, say 1.05, the number of neutrons will increase to 105 at the beginning of the second generation and reach 14,800 at the 100th generation. A few neutrons could thus initiate a growing chain of fissions. In a bomb this chain is allowed to proceed without control. In fact, the key to an efficient bomb is to make K very high so that a very large number of fissions take place in an extremely short time. This will be a very small fraction of a



second as the duration between one generation and the next is less than a millionth of a second if the fission is caused by fast neutron, and less than a thousandth of a second if initiated by a slow neutron as is usually the case in a thermal reactor.

Critical size is the size for which

the number of neutrons produced just balances those lost by leakage and non fission capture. The critical size is not a constant but depends on fuel composition, the moderator used, shape and geometrical arrangement of fuel assemblies, and presence of extraneous materials.

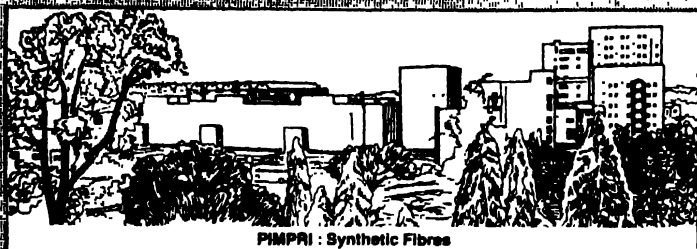
to DAE, it will annually breed as a byproduct about 30 kilograms of plutonium which will be outside international safeguards. However, officials have denied reports that Dhruva was meant expressly for the production of plutonium for bombs to counter Pakistan's nuclear threat. All nuclear reactors in the world using uranium as fuel do produce plutonium and Dhruva is no exception. It may be incorrect to link Dhruva with

nuclear weapons programme as this purpose can be better served by building dedicated facilities exclusively making plutonium for bombs. In fact, all the nuclear powers began their bomb projects by setting up what are known as production reactors to make plutonium and later switched to dual purpose reactors that made plutonium and some quantity of electricity as a bonus.

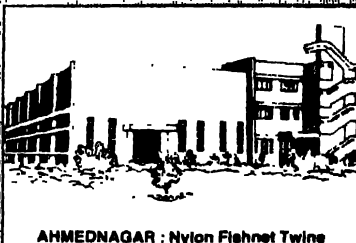
In fact, India is not dependent on

Dhruva for plutonium in case it decides to go nuclear. It had been reprocessing spent fuel of Cirus since 1964, accumulating some 400 kilograms of plutonium over the years. The plutonium for the Pokhran blast in 1974 came out of this and another 100 to 120 kilograms were used to make fuel rods for the fast breeder test reactor nearing completion at Kalpakkam near Madras.

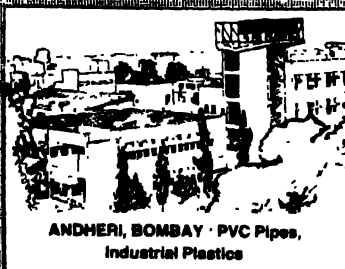
A Special Correspondent



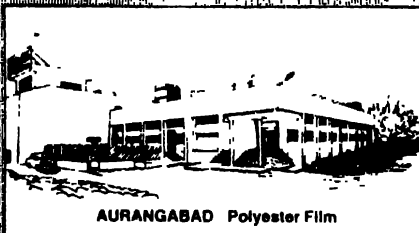
PIMPRI : Synthetic Fibres



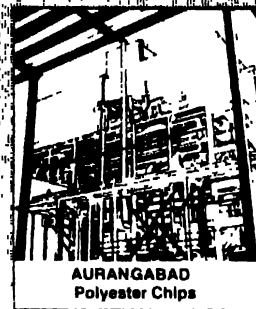
AHMEDNAGAR : Nylon Fishnet Twine



ANDHERI, BOMBAY : PVC Pipes,
Industrial Plastics



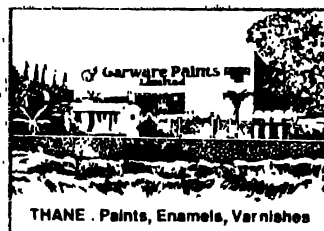
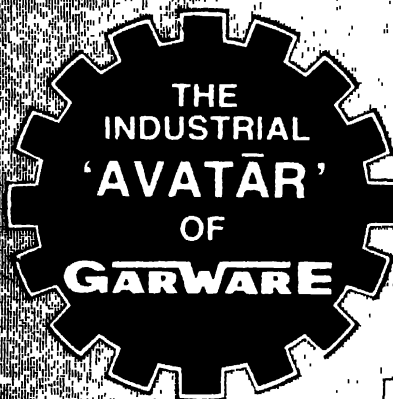
AURANGABAD Polyester Film



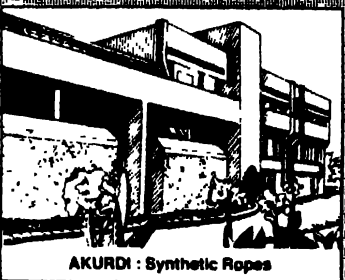
AURANGABAD
Polyester Chips



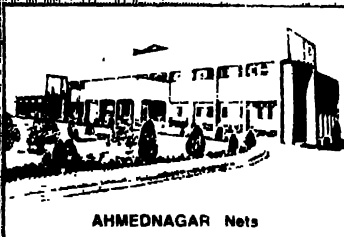
NASIK : PVC Pipes,
Metalised Polyester Film



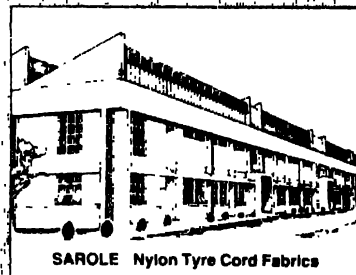
THANE : Paints, Enamels, Varnishes



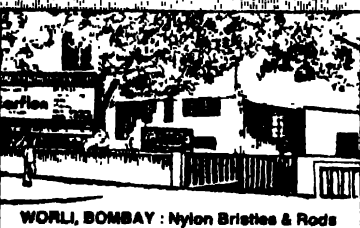
AKURDI : Synthetic Ropes



AHMEDNAGAR Nets



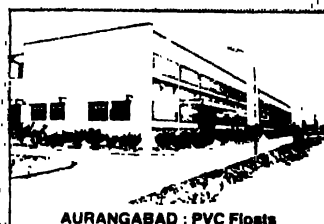
SAROLE Nylon Tyre Cord Fabrics



WORLI, BOMBAY : Nylon Bristles & Rods



HIGH SEAS : Ships / Supply Vessels



AURANGABAD : PVC Floats

BEGINNING 1 SEPTEMBER 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This week you will be busy with social engagements but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health. Professionals will not be in the good books of their superiors while businessmen are likely to suffer a setback. This is not the opportune time to get married. However, at home your children will be a source of joy.

Good dates 1, 3 and 4

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 4

Favourable direction South west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is a favourable time for those employed in the public sector. Those in love will also find this a good period. However, this is not an opportune time to solve legal problems. Postpone all important plans. Businessmen are advised not to take hasty decisions and politicians should be cautious while dealing with the masses. Prospects are bright for gamblers.

Good dates 2, 4 and 5

Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 7

Favourable direction East



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The professional front will continue to be inspiring. Businessmen and public sector employees will prosper. You will come in contact with an influential person. Matters pertaining to property will be resolved in your favour. A journey towards the middle of the week will prove financially profitable. The homefront will remain peaceful.

Good dates 3, 5 and 6

Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 4

Favourable direction West



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is a favourable week to solve legal problems. Social engagements will keep you busy throughout the week but avoid late night parties. Students will get opportunities to study abroad or in reputed institutions. Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway but they should guard against deception. A letter will bring good news. Your health will improve.

Good dates 4, 6 and 7

Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 8

Favourable direction North east



LEO (15 August—14 September) An extremely lucky week for lovers. You can go ahead with marriage plans. Businessmen should check all documents meticulously before signing a contract. Professionals, especially those in government service, should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Students are advised to be more careful about choosing their careers.

Good dates 2, 4 and 6

Lucky numbers 2, 5 and 6

Favourable direction South



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Success on all fronts is a certainty for you this week. Professionals will make steady progress while businessmen will bag lucrative contracts. On the financial front, gains through unexpected sources are indicated. At home, your children will succeed in competitions and give you a lot of pleasure. This is an ideal time for marriage negotiations.

Good dates 3, 5 and 7

Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 5

Favourable direction North



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Rare honours are in store for creative artists and writers. But your success is likely to arouse the jealousy of your relatives. You will need a lot of tact and patience to overcome embarrassing situations at home. Your deteriorating health will add to your worries. Police men will receive awards for gallantry. A lucky time for lovers.

Good dates 1, 4 and 5

Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9

Favourable direction East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A fair measure of success lies in store for you this week. Businessmen will make steady progress but they should guard against deception. This is also a favourable week for lovers but try and avoid adventurous plans. A pleasure trip you were looking forward to is in the offing. At home, your children will come out with flying colours in competitions. A pleasant surprise awaits you.

Good dates 2, 6 and 7

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 5

Favourable direction South west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) The time is ideal for love and marriage negotiations. Businessmen will find this period favourable. A pleasant surprise at the end of the week is in store for you. Your financial prospects will look up. A friendship that will blossom this week will prove very beneficial in the near future. However, avoid legal complications and stay away from politics.

Good dates 3, 4 and 5

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 6

Favourable direction North



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is not a lucky phase for love and courtship. Misunderstandings may lead to estranged relations. Domestic worries will continue to plague you. Do not take even your close friends for granted as enemies will be active during this period. Your financial prospects will look up; do not be extravagant and try to repay your debts.

Good dates 1, 5 and 6

Lucky numbers 3, 5 and 9

Favourable direction South east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is not a good week financially. You may have to borrow money to tide over this lean period. Lovers are advised to steer clear of all controversies. Your health will add to your worries. At home, one of your relatives may fall ill, adding to your financial burden. Consult your elders before you change your job. A lucky week for students.

Good dates 2, 4 and 7

Lucky numbers 1, 6 and 8

Favourable direction North



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is the opportune time to carry out marriage negotiations and the domestic front will be inspiring. You will get an opportunity to change your career but do not take hasty decisions and consult your elders before finalising plans. Financial and job prospects are bright this week. A letter will bring good tidings. Some of you may gain through inheritance or even win a lottery.

Good dates 2, 3 and 4

Lucky numbers 2, 5 and 9

Favourable direction South

For those born between 15 September and 14 October

You have a tendency to criticise men and their manners with the result that you inspire a lot of hostility. People generally avoid your company and even your friends steer clear of you. You are also very diplomatic in your dealings with others. Some of you are very energetic and do not hesitate to undertake challenging assignments. By temperament you are fastidious and you are not satisfied with things easily. Take up the creative arts as your profession. Women born during this period are generally arrogant but they are hardworking.

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VARIETY

THIS INDIA



KARAIKAL: The three month old love affair between a fisherman's son and a merchant's daughter ended happily in the police station here recently, with the parents of both blessing them. Saktivel, 21, and Shanti, 18, were sure their parents would not agree to their inter-caste marriage and so they took their problem to an inspector of police. The inspector consulted his superintendent and on his advice, met the parents and persuaded them to give their consent to the match. The marriage was solemnised in the town police station—*Deccan Chronicle* (Avula Ramesh Chander, Hyderabad)

BANGALORE: It looks like a telephone, a notebook, a lighter and a bottle but all of them are pens—the prized possession of a Bangalore journalist who is aiming to enter the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The journalist, Mr Ishwar Bhat, showed a PTI correspondent his 15-year collection of some 2,000 pens of different varieties acquired from nearly 50 countries of the world. His collections include a rose pen, the writing from which smells like rose, the cherry pen which gives off a strong cherry essence, pens which look like carrot, stethoscope, toothbrush, pipe, comb, rifle and even fork. While the three-centimetre jotter is the smallest of pens in his collection so far, the longest was a 53 cm-pen-cum-pointer specially designed in the United States for use by teachers. The pen is just like the antenna of a transistor. Another pen from Germany can house 13 refills at a time—*Indian Express* (M.R. Jayaprakash, Bangalore)

DHARMAPURI: For an unhappily-married tribal inhabitant of the verdant Sitheri forest range in the district, freedom from the bonds of wedlock is just a matter of raising Rs 650. Among the tradition-ridden tribals, a woman can divorce her husband by paying him Rs 650 and can live with any man of her choice. But the offspring of any unhappy marriage would always remain in the custody of the husband. In spite of this easy way of untying the nuptial knot, divorce is not a common affair as differences between man and wife are, in most cases, settled by village elders, according to the inhabitants of Kalnadu, a tribal hamlet in Sitheri hills. In appearance, the tribals are no different from the Tamils living in the adjoining rural areas but they speak Tamil with a slang—*Deccan Chronicle* (L.N. Srinivasan, Hyderabad)

BHUBANESWAR: Orissa's electric supply system fell victim to a snake recently. The snake got tangled with a transformer at Rourkela and snapped off the power supply system. The power draw in Rourkela being high, the incident resulted in the tripping of the Hirakud power project's supply system. This led to a chain reaction and caused tripping of Balimela and Machkund power project's distribution system. The state was without any power supply for half an hour between 2 am and 2.30 am, when the supplies were restored—*Indian Express* (Ravi Sharma, Hyderabad)

LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Mr Narain Dutt Tewari, passed his intermediate examinations only as recently as in 1982, according to a certificate issued by the UP Board of High School and Intermediate Education, a few days ago. The certificate gives Mr Tewari's roll number as 445032 and his subjects as Hindi, English, Psychology, Civics and Sociology. It also reveals that he had passed the examination in the first class. The Lok Dal member, Mr Shatrudra Prakash, displayed a copy of the certificate in the state Assembly on Saturday. A rather startled Mr Tewari informed the House that a Hindi magazine *Maya* had procured the certificate to prove that a racket dealing in fake certificates was active in the state. The chief minister said stern steps would be taken to bust the racket. In a tongue-in-cheek statement, Mr Shatrudra Prakash said it was unfortunate that while most students had to wait for years for their results the chief minister had easily procured his certificate. — *The Telegraph* (M.S. Shah, Bombay)

WITHOUT COMMENT



I want a state in which there is peace, where there is no fear, where people of all religions live like brothers — Sant Longowal, in his last speech at Sherpur.

A man of peace has fallen to the bullets of assassins. The tragic death of Santji... is a tragedy not just for Punjab but for the whole country—Rajiv Gandhi

There are no words to condemn this dastardly act—President Zail Singh, on the assassination of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal

A brave man who had the interests of his people and the country at heart has been tragically shot down by cowards—Arjun Singh, Governor of Punjab

The light has gone out of our lives. We are directionless. But we are determined to follow the path shown to us by Santji—Balwant Singh, senior Akali leader.

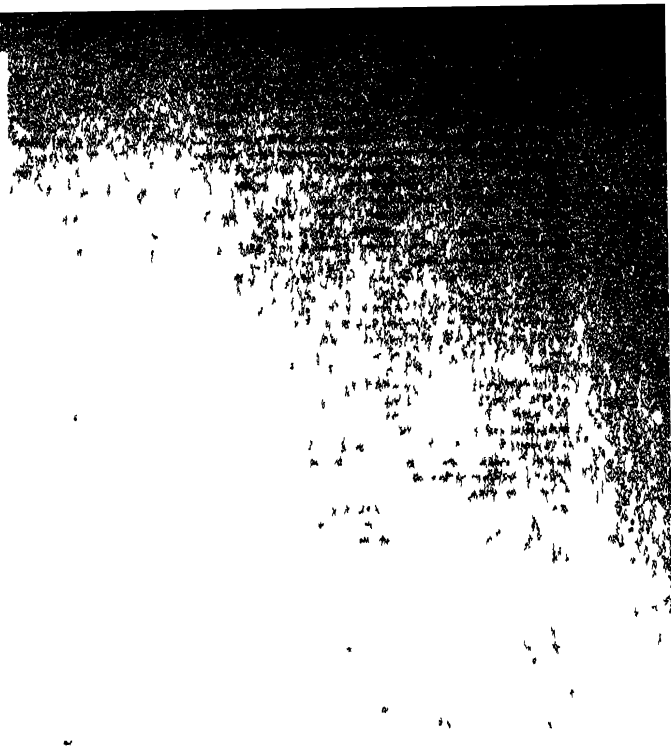
Those who strived and struggled for peace achieved it at the altar of martyrdom—Madhu Dandavate, Janata Party MP

Sant Longowal is dead. But his death can be the beginning of the rebirth of Punjab—Editorial in *The Telegraph*

His (Longowal's) martyrdom will have served a great purpose as did Mahatma Gandhi's in 1948 if it shakes the Sikhs as the Mahatma's shook the Hindus into an awareness of their duty to fight the agents of hate and violence—Editorial in *The Times of India*



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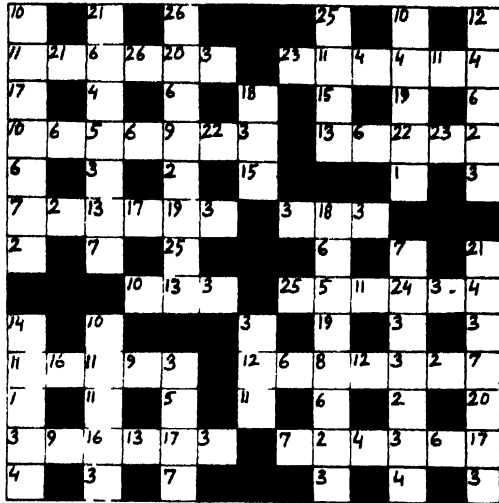
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TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross

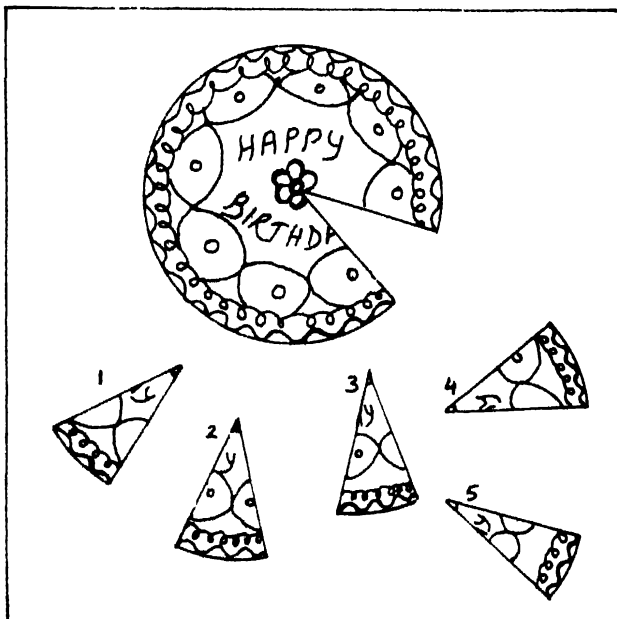


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					A	S						

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			M									

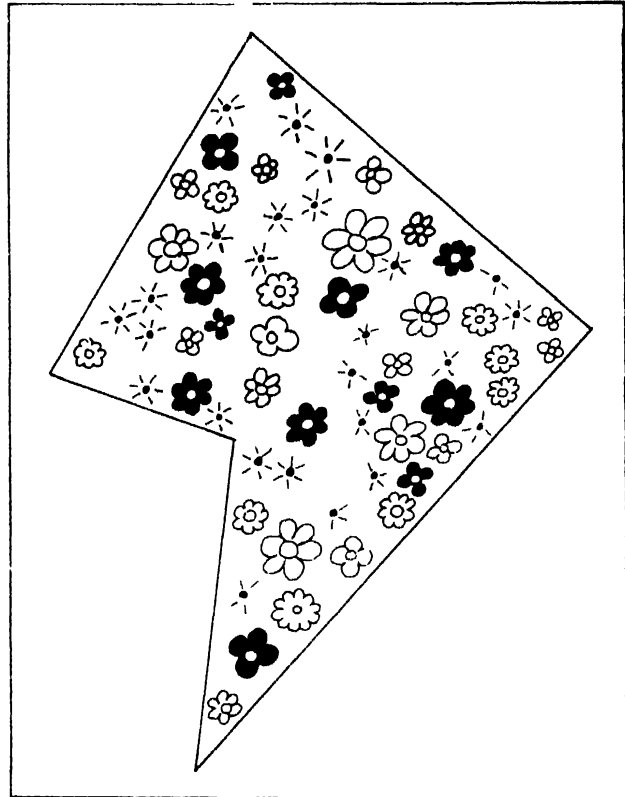
Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start, three letters are given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Quick Look



How quickly can you spot which wedge was cut out of the cake?

Figure it Out



Can you draw four straight lines so that there are 1, 3, 5, 7, etc., flowers in each section? The flowers can be of any size or shape.

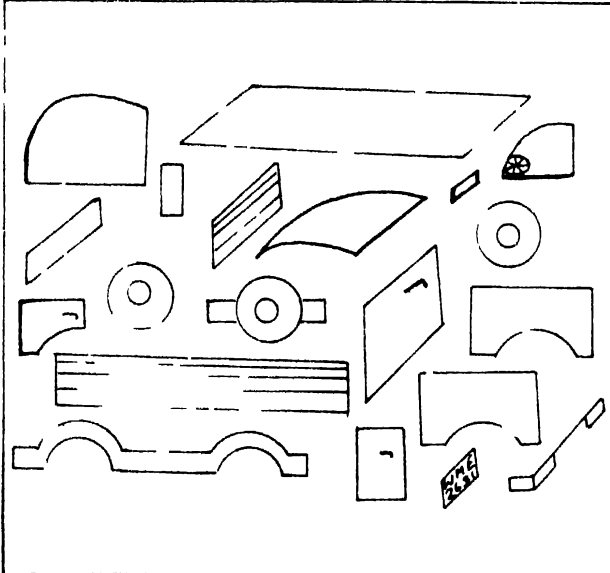
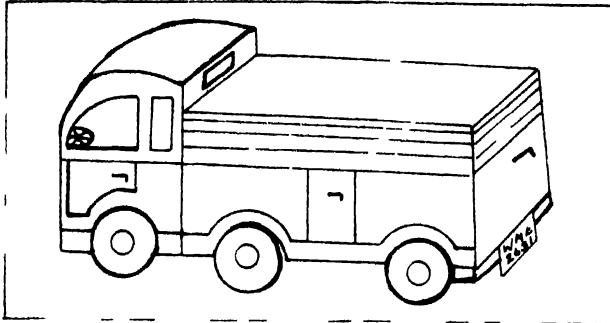
Word Power

S T M A
N O R E
E N S N
B R A D I E R

The groups of letters given above can be transformed into words by the insertion of the same two letters. What are they?

TEASERS

Shape Sleuth



Oh! Oh! This mechanic is in trouble! Having dismantled this truck to overhaul it, he now finds that he can't put it together again because one piece is missing. To make matters worse, he does not know which piece it is. Can you help him?

Quick Think

How quickly can you work out mentally, the sum of all the numbers from 1 to 200?

Solutions to last week's Teasers

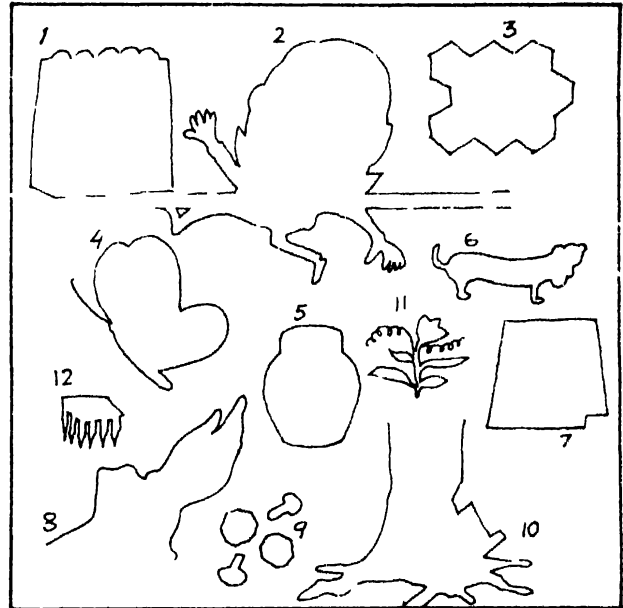
Really: The numbers 1 to 16 add up to 136. All the numbers face up will also add up to 68.

Witsharpener: Rana cannot be a musician or a banker, and he was planning to become a mason, originally. So he must have finally become an astronaut. Mac Soni didn't wish to become an astronaut and become neither a banker nor a musician, since the banker played golf and the musician tennis. So, Mac Soni became a mason. That leaves us with N Akber and Mini Sica who must have ended up becoming a banker and a musician respectively. If you ignore the clues, they indicate the eventual profession of each one. Rana Stcut is an anagram of *astronaut*, Mac Soni of *masonic*, N Akber of *banker* and Mini Sica of *musician*.

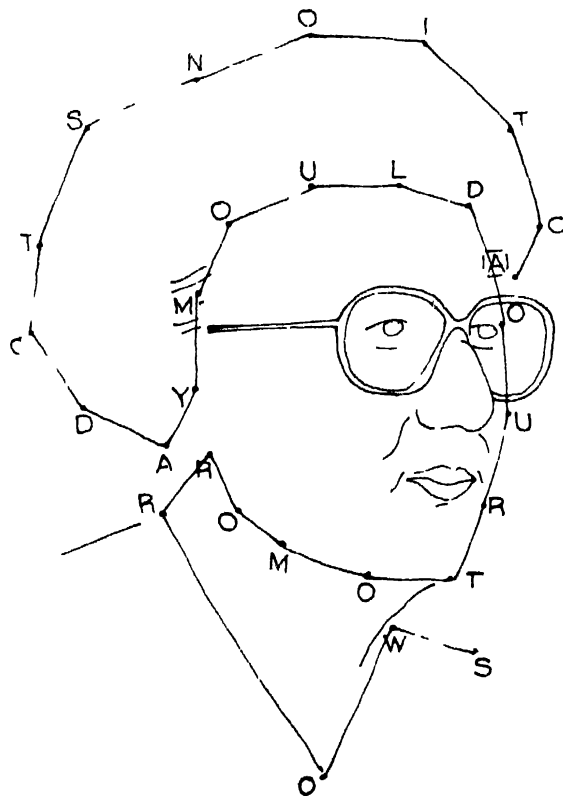
Eyeball Bender: 112 Blocks

Blockbuster: Rage, Rags, Raps, Rape, Rips, Ripe, Risk, Mind Bender, Armband, Backwaters, Cheekbone, Finger Print, Foot Step, Head Rest, Hip Flask, Jaw Breaker, Leg Spinner, Lip Stick, Mouth Piece, Nail Polish, Neck Line, Palm Candy, Skeleton Service, Tooth Ache.

What's in a Word: (Beginning clockwise, at the top righthand corner) 1 Dates 2 Lgg 3 Honey 6 Sausage 7 Cheese 10 Chop 9 Nuts 8 Lady's Finger 12 Chip 4 Butter 5 Cream 11 Peas



Shape Sleuth: Actions today mould our tomorrows



VARIETY

CHESS

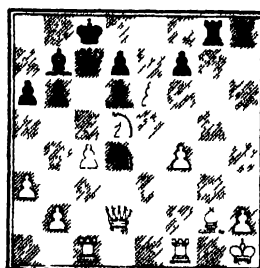
In chess, it is not enough to play brilliant moves, it is also necessary to win. There is a philosophy of play most prevalent in the Soviet Union which sees the game first and foremost as a spectacle and only secondly as an adversarial contest. It is perhaps in reaction to this, dare I say somewhat imperialist school of thought that the Karpovian cult of pragmatism has grown and flourished over the past decade.

I give an enthralling but rather sad example of what can happen when these two great philosophies come face to face. C Hansen (White) J Plaskett (Black) English Opening Copenhagen 1985

1 P-Q4	N-KB5	2 N-KB3	P-B4
3 P-B4	PxP	4 NxP	P-QN3
5 N-QB3	B-N2	6 B-N5	P-QR3
7 BxN	NPxB	8 P-K4	P-K3
9 B-K2	O-B2	10 O-O	P-KR4

Black's play is provocative and adventurous, meanwhile White takes a more taciturn approach.

Plaskett (Black) to move



Hansen (White)

11 P-QR8	N-B3	12 K-R1	P-R5
13 P-B4	P-B4	14 PxP	P-R6
15 B-B3	PxP	16 BxP	O-O-O

White has been outplayed. At the cost of a pawn his opponent has been able to open dangerous lines to the White king and the two bishops are beginning to look most menacing. Nevertheless Hansen keeps his cool.

17 R-B1	B-Q3	18 Q-Q2	QR-N1
19 N-Q5!			

A necessary attempt to plug the long diagonal without which the threat of RxB would be terminal.

19 NxN!

For if 20 NxQ RxB wins

20 PxP!!? **DIAGRAM**

A mind bending attempt to confuse matters which demands a relatively simple reply viz 20 BPxP 21 QxN PxN 22 PxP B-B4 23 Q-Q2 Q-Q3 24 P-N4 RxB! Instead Jim Plaskett gets carried away with the brilliance of his own attack.

20 N-B4??

With ideas of N-N6+ and B-B4+ but the attack is an illusion.

21 PxBP R-N2 22 NxQ KxN

A sad admission that all has gone wrong as can be seen from:

(i) 22 N-N6+ 23 K-N1 B-B4+ 24 R-B2
(ii) 22 RxB 23 QxR BxQ+ 24 KxB N-K6+
25 K-B3 NxR 26 N-Q5 NxP+ 27 K-N3

and the knight never escapes.
23 P-B5! PxP 24 Q-R5+ K-N1

25 BxB KxB 26 R-QB3
and White soon won.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

For many years players from Canada have felt that they did not have a fair chance to qualify for the Bermuda Bowl. This time they could hardly complain for they were able to contest against Mexico and Bermuda for the second north American berth. In the final round they easily defeated Bermuda. This deal occurred in the qualifying round.

Dealer South N-S vulnerable

♠ J 9 8 4	♥ 2	♦ J 10 6 3	♣ 10 6 2
♠ —	♥ A Q 8 7 2	♦ A Q 8 7 2	♣ K 10 7 6 5
♠ A K Q J 9 8 7 4	♥ W	♦ S	♣ 9 8 7 4 2
♠ 3	♥ E	♦ 5	♣ 5
	♥ S	♦ 4	♣ 9 4
	♥ A Q 3		
	♥ A K Q 5		
	♥ 3		
	♥ K J 10 6 5		

When Bermuda was North-South the bidding went

South	West	North	East
1♣ (1)	5♣ (2)	dble	5♦ (3)
6♣ (4)	No	No	No

(1) Strong artificial
(2) Not a misprint a transfer to diamonds

(3) Slightly better than leaving the transfer to his partner his own hand is unknown to the opposition.
(4) A good decision.

Can you guess how the play went? Not too difficult really. Gupta led the 4 of diamonds. South, slow witted, played the 2 from dummy. East played the 5, realised eventually that it was his trick and duly returned a heart for one down.

The Bermuda Bowl will be played at Sao Paulo in October. The intended venue was India. The change was made because India could not be relied on to grant entry to teams from certain countries. It seems a pity that bridge players cannot be left to make their own decisions.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- 1 Name the first man to fly over the South Pole.
- 2 He was Prophet Mohammed's successor as well as the first Caliph. Name him.
- 3 What is the method of writing used by the ancient Sumerians by making impressions on wet clay tablets which were later dried and hardened?
- 4 How many men have landed on the moon?
- 5 Which war in Africa lasted from 1899 to 1902 when concentration camps were first set up?

- 6 Who is regarded as the father of modern China?
- 7 In which year was the English East India Company set up?
- 8 What do the following have in common: Enrico Fermi, Lise Meitner and J Robert Oppenheimer?
- 9 How is Roy Schrier Jr better known as?
- 10 Name the odd one out: Ivan Pavlov, Ernst Rutherford, Robert Koch, Sir Ronald Ross and Hargovind Khorana.

Rutherford was awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

- 1 Richard Byrd in 1929
- 2 Abu Bakr
- 3 Cuneiform
- 4 Twelve—two each from Apollos 11 and 14
- 5 The Boer war
- 6 Sun-Yat Sen
- 7 1600 A.D.
- 8 They all worked towards the development of the atom bomb.
- 9 Rock Hudson the ailing American actor.
- 10 Ernst Rutherford. All the others were awarded Nobel Prizes for their contribution.

ANSWERS

PEANUTS

featuring
"Good ol'
Charlie Brown"

by SCHULZ



A POP
FLY!

I GOT IT!
IT'S ALL
MINE!



IF I CATCH THIS BALL
WE'LL WIN OUR FIRST
GAME OF THE SEASON



PLEASE LET ME CATCH
IT! PLEASE LET ME BE
THE HERO! PLEASE LET
ME CATCH IT! PLEASE!



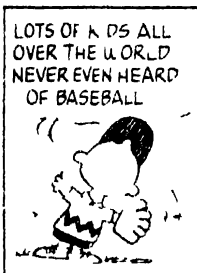
ON THE OTHER HAND
DO I THINK I
DESERVE TO BE
THE HERO?



THE KID WHO HIT
IT DOESN'T WANT
TO BE THE GOAT



IS A BASEBALL
GAME REALLY
THIS IMPORTANT?



LOTS OF KIDS ALL
OVER THE WORLD
NEVER EVEN HEARD
OF BASEBALL



LOTS OF KIDS DON'T GET TO
PLAY AT ALL OR HAVE A
PLACE TO SLEEP OR



BONK!



CHARLIE BROWN
HOW COULD YOU
MISS SUCH AN
EASY POP FLY?

I PRAYED
MYSELF
OUT OF IT

VARIETY/SCIENCE

The Social Barrier

A treatment developed five years ago in India promises the eventual elimination of leprosy but doctors say that the stigma attached to the disease inhibits people from seeking treatment. Of the world's 11 million lepers, four million are in India. The so-called multi drug treatment (MDT) is very effective, said Dr R.H. Thangaraj, head of International Leprosy Association. MDT consisting of three drugs can shorten the duration of the disease and kill the bacilli that cause leprosy in two weeks to three months, he said.

Identifying the Hurdles

A radar system is under development which should reduce the number of accidents in which helicopters—military ones in particular—are involved when they collide with hardly visible obstacles such as power cables. The innovation by a team of researchers at Redhill, Surrey, in England exploits an old technique called frequency modulated continuous wave (FMCW) by using the latest microprocessor and computer technology. Instead of transmitting short pulses as is the case in conventional radars, the FMCW sends a continuous signal to the obstacles being detected. The signal is fired at the target and is reflected back at a slightly different frequency. The height of the obstacles is colour coded so that red will locate the top of the cable tower, blue a mid point height and green the lowest elevation.

The Racist Puff

Cigarette smoking inflicts disproportionately high damage on black Americans, according to a study whose authors say research in this area is inadequate and who call for an increase in anti-smoking programmes directed towards blacks. Dr Richard Cooper and Dr Brian F. Simmons, cardiologists at Cook County Hospital in Chicago said in a special issue of *The New York State Journal of Medicine* that blacks had the highest rates of coronary heart diseases and lung cancer, the main smoking related diseases in the US. The death rate from cancer among black men is 40 per cent higher than that for white men, the report said. However, smoking could not be the sole reason for the high death rate.

Changes in the Climate

Scientists have been collecting data to study the factors that influence climatic changes over the years. Researchers at the Climatic Research Unit of University of East Anglia at Norwich have already assessed the impact of climatic change. Prof. Hubert Lamb of the Research Unit has focussed some of his work on the influence of man's discharging carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Data collected by Dr Tom Wigley shows that a commonly accepted amount of 290 parts of carbon dioxide per million should in fact be 270 parts per million. This "greenhouse effect" is believed to be one of the causes for the erratic changes in climatic conditions.

DELHI DIARY

Feuding Aides



M I Fotedar

Infighting among prime ministerial aides is not unique to the Rajiv Gandhi regime. If we take stock of the last decade alone, at first there were stories about the differences between N. K. Seshan, the aide whom Mrs. Indira Gandhi inherited from Jawaharlal Nehru's staff, and R. K. Dhawan, who began his career with her as a stenotypist and later rose to hold the rank of a joint

secretary (Seshan lost out to Dhawan because he refused to quit the PM's office when the Janata Party won and ultimately he could not last in the new regime). After 1980, Dhawan's supremacy was challenged at first by J. N. Mishra (who had to quit government service and join Morarji Deas's Sanjay Manch) and later by V. S. Tripathi (who still is in the PM's office but due to

serious illness has been undergoing treatment abroad for the past few months). Makhan Lal Fotedar also took on Dhawan and managed to last out in the new regime while Dhawan had to quit. Now Fotedar is having differences with Arun Singh, the parliamentary secretary who is the super boss of the Rajiv Gandhi outfit. While the popular stories about infighting in the highest echelons centre around differences between Arun Singh and Arun Nehru, the minister of state for power, the reality is that the real feud is the one between Arun Singh and Fotedar. Things have come to such a state that attempts have been made by a particular camp to plant stories against the other in the press. Will Fotedar be able to endure Arun Singh's wrath? With Rajiv Gandhi having met Iqbal Masih, Fotedar's confrontationalist policy in Kashmir seems to be under strain. Apparently, the new order is replacing the old. And the only relic from Mrs. Gandhi's times in the new setup is finding things difficult.

Unaccounted Accounts

Can an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer deposit Rs 17,83,380 in a bank in his own name and in the names of his family members over a period of just three years? The vigilance sleuths of Himachal Pradesh have just discovered that an IPS officer who has been on deputation in the state government's undertakings has acquired wealth disproportionate to his income and deposited the money in the Chandigarh branch of the Corporation Bank. The income tax authorities have been in the dark about these deposits. It was a chance discovery. The offices of a firm which has been supplying material to a Himachal undertaking were being raided, in connection with an enquiry. The sleuths suddenly found a bank deposit slip, which showed that Rs 30,000 had been deposited in the name of the officer, who headed the undertaking which was under vigilance scrutiny. A trip to the bank opened the sleuths' eyes. In separate accounts, the officer's family had deposited Rs 2,21,557, Rs 5,65,382, Rs 3,79,393, Rs 4,65,520, Rs 56,213 and Rs 95,313 over the last few years. The officer, who was a blue-eyed boy of former chief minister Ram Lal, has been under a cloud since Veer Bhadra Singh became the chief minister. The vigilance report is now lying on the chief minister's desk. If action is taken, then for the first time an officer of the rank of deputy inspector general may be charged with graft.

TAILPIECE The PM has his own way of striking a balance while Arun Singh rushed to see Longowal at the hospital, it was Arun Nehru who was sent to the funeral.

D.E. Nizamuddin

Calling BBC

Whether it is Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's own decision or his current public relations planner, Mani Shankar Aiyer's, the British Broadcasting Corporation—the BBC as it is generally identified—is out to reap a rich harvest. BBC has never been a favourite with the Indian rulers and its correspondent Mark Tully was thrown out of the country during the Emergency. Although the correspondent was readmitted after the Emergency was lifted, the people who mattered in the government eyed the BBC suspiciously without reasons always. Barely has the storm over the protagonist of a separate Sikh state, Jagjit Singh Chauhan's highly provocative statement on

a BBC domestic service died down, the BBC has been pleasantly surprised by the knowledge that it can have not just one but two interviews with the Prime Minister during his projected tour of the United Kingdom this October.

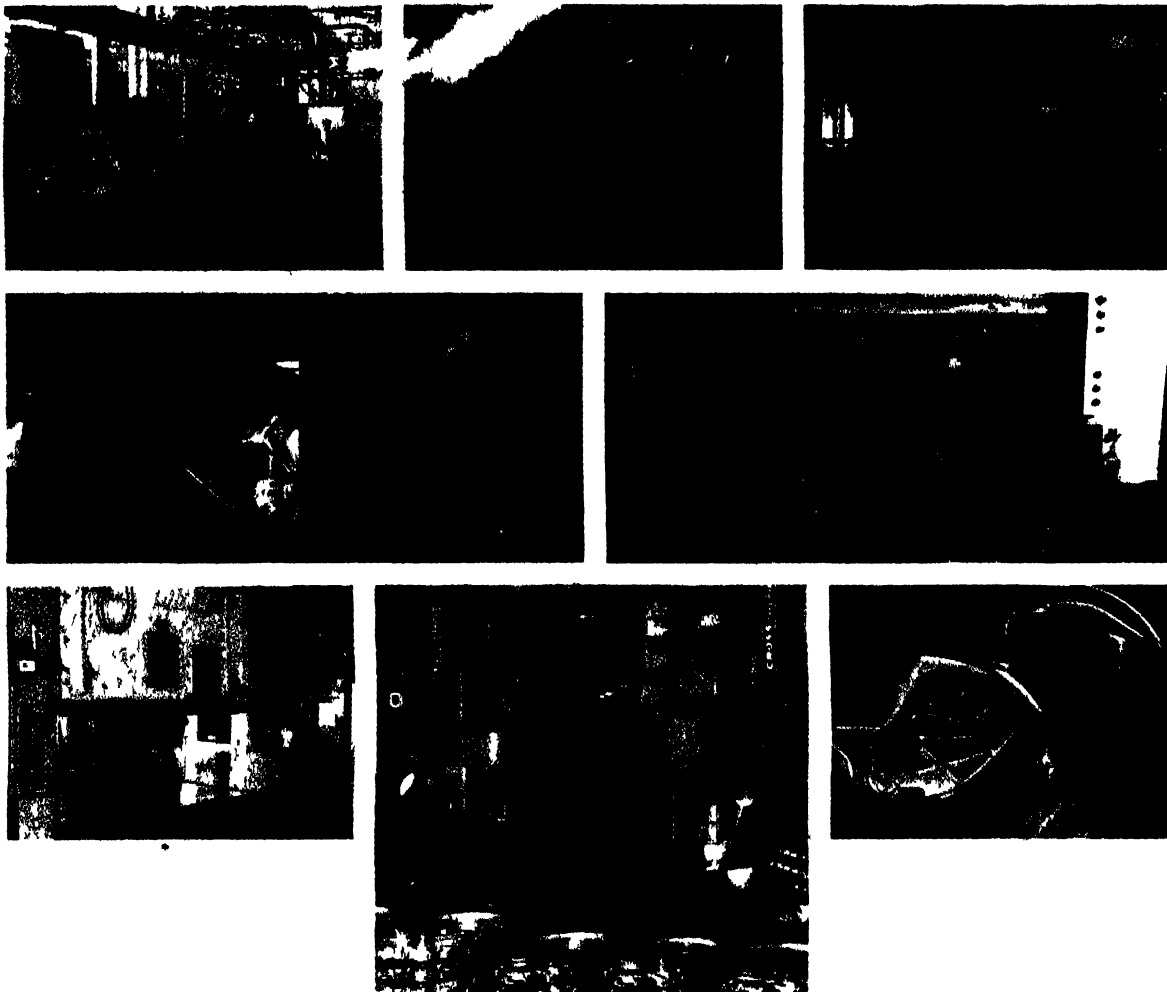
Two in hand is obviously worth more than one. But sometimes plenty can cause problems as it must be to the BBC which has to schedule both the interviews in such a manner without appearing to be repetitive (translation boring). Success in his recent media encounters has surely given confidence to the Prime Minister (or is it Mr Aiyer?) to take two at a time. The BBC is not a four-letter word, after all. Certainly not till Tully's book on Punjab is out.

A 'Hand' for 'Charkha'

In the Congress centenary year it would be unfair to ignore the other "Congress" the party led by Sharad Pawar. While the fate of Pawar's merger moves with the Congress (S) hangs on a string, the party has gone ahead with the centenary celebrations. To begin with in Kerala, it has started distributing *charkhas* to freedom fighters. (The party's election symbol too is *charkha*.) One Congress (S) leader mocked a Congress (I) MP the other day in the central hall of Parliament: "We are at least distributing *charkhas*, what are you doing?" Pat came the reply, "providing a 'hand' to run the *charkha*."

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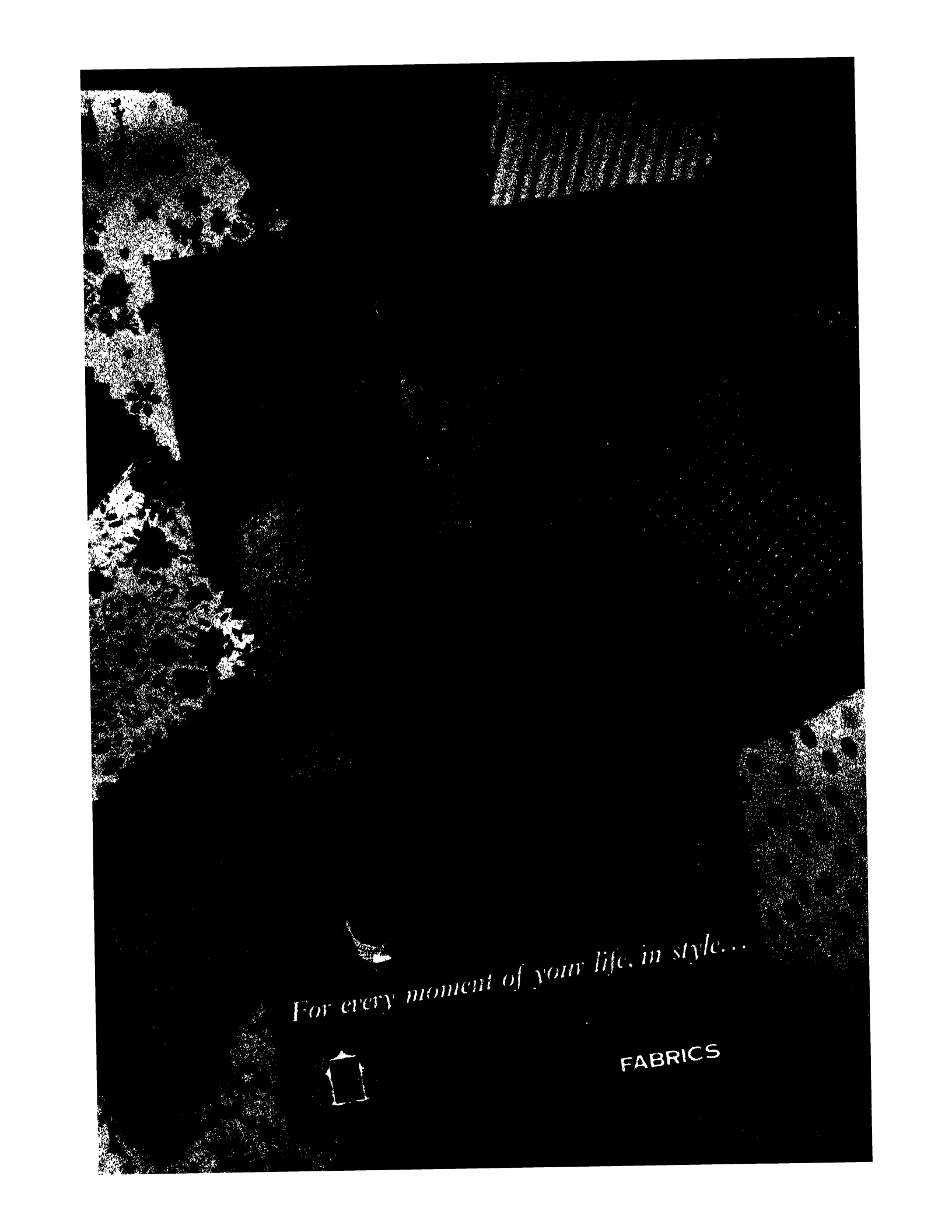
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Indian Cricket: Testing Time

The might of the Indian cricket team will be put to test by a mediocre Sri Lanka side and later by the Australians this winter. Though Kapil Dev and his boys have proved that they are the undisputed champions of one day cricket, the Indians have strangely failed to withstand the rigours of a five day Test match. Can the Indians live up to their invincible image? Clive Andrew O'Brien and Srinjoy Chowdhury examine the question.

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Has the Indian government won back the confidence of Sri Lanka's Juntas by revoking the deportation order on S.C. Chandrasekaran, one of the three militant leaders who were asked to leave the country? A report by Olga Telts from Bombay and Amit Chitrap from Madras.

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Hiteswar Saikia, chief minister of Assam, told Alapan Bandopadhyay



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How airworthy are the Dorniers being purchased by Vayudoot from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)? A report by Ritu Sarin.

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With rationalists and eminent educationists challenging the divine power of India's most widely known Godman, rumours are afloat that the Sai Baba has decided to abandon his sprawling ashram. Chidanand Rajghatta investigates.

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Cross-currents

SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA

The king can do no wrong. This seems to have been the dictum guiding the government while the Lok Pal Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 26 August and sought to be hurriedly passed in the last two days of the monsoon session of Parliament. Suddenly the government had a change of heart and the Bill was referred to a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament. When the winter session begins sometime in November this august committee is expected to table its findings and hopefully an enactment aimed at curbing corruption in high places will be added to the laws of the land. Whatever be the shape of the Bill, the definition of high places will not cover the Prime Minister. According to the ruling party, if the proposed Lok Pal is allowed to sit in judgement on the actions of the Prime Minister, then it may have a destabilising effect. Moreover, if the Prime Minister is put within the Lok Pal's purview, then the purpose of the present Bill will be defeated. The proposal is to create a Lok Pal who would entertain complaints against the members of the union council of ministers and the parliamentary secretaries and after going into the charges, submit his recommendations to the Prime Minister, whose judgement would be final.

To file a complaint before the Lok Pal, a complainant will have to deposit a thousand rupees, which will be forfeited if the complaint is proved wrong. Furthermore, a false complaint can cause the complainant to be tried summarily and jailed for three years and fined upto Rs 50,000 (which if the Lok Pal so desires, can be awarded to the public functionary against whom the complaint is made). On

paper, the intentions seem to be pious. Around the time the proposed Lok Pal Bill was being discussed in Parliament, the preliminary investigations against the Harvane chief minister Bhajan Lal were concluded and a clean chit was given to him. If the proposed legislation had been rushed through Parliament, as the government intended to do, then Bhajan Lal could have felt cheated. Had he been probed by the proposed Lok Pal, then apart from sending his political opponents to jail, Bhajan Lal could have hoped to be rewarded out of the fine realised from the complainants.

There are many curious aspects in the present Lok Pal Bill. For one, the proceedings before the Lok Pal would be barred to the press. No publication of the goings on in the Lok Pal's court will be allowed till he has closed the case. 90 days have elapsed from the date when findings have been sent to the Prime Minister. And if a person is exonerated before the Lok Pal, then the courts will not be allowed to take cognisance of the complaint if it is filed under the existing provisions of the penal laws. Even if the Lok Pal has found someone guilty, then in the event of the Prime Minister not accept-

ing the findings, the protection from prosecution in courts will be accorded to the public functionary. These aspects, perhaps, betray the motives behind the introduction of the Lok Pal Bill. Shielding the corrupt rather than punishing the guilty may become the order of the day if caution is not exercised now. Detergents should not be used to provide a clean image in public life.

The Lok Pal Bill should be viewed in the background of some of the exposes which have been made in Parliament and in the press in recent years. The most glaring example is that of the Thal Vaishet case. The opposition was able to prove on the basis of documentary evidence the discrepancies in the award of certain contracts to an Italian firm which had jumped the queue and bagged the deal despite its not being shortlisted by expert committees. The expose in Parliament did not bring forth a condemnation of the guilty. Instead, the Central Bureau of Investigation was asked to probe how the government files had been leaked to MPs. The guilty have gone scot-free while the CBI have harassed and for a while even arrested the agents of the firm which should have normally bagged the contract but

for the special position enjoyed by the Italian company.

More recently, a Congress(I) MP and joint secretary of the AICC(I), K Sambhashiva Rao who has been accused of misusing his position as a director of the Andhra Bank to favour a Hyderabad based firm, Progressive Constructions Private Ltd (which was promoted by him) has sought a CBI probe into his affairs while admitting that discrepancies have been committed. K S Rao has alleged that the opposition was pointing an accusing finger at him because he had defeated a Telugu Desam candidate in the polls (axiomatically if he is held guilty, then it will be a political defeat for the ruling party). Addressing a press conference in the capital on 30 August, K S Rao has admitted that there were some irregularities in the transactions of Progressive Constructions but pointed out in the same breath that 90 per cent of the business transactions in the country involved irregularities. He defended the deals by saying that the irregularities committed by his firm were technical and not criminal practices.

Curbing corruption in high places should not be treated as a political gimmick. The laws of defamation are stringent enough to prohibit wrong charges being levelled against any one. More than destabilisation, what should worry the policy makers is the moral erosion of public functionaries which can lead to the people's loss of faith in the system. The Prime Minister should himself offer to undergo the scrutiny of the Lok Pal. And to ensure that justice prevails in all cases, instead of the PM, the Parliament of India should be the arbiter to decide whether the Lok Pal's verdict holds or not.

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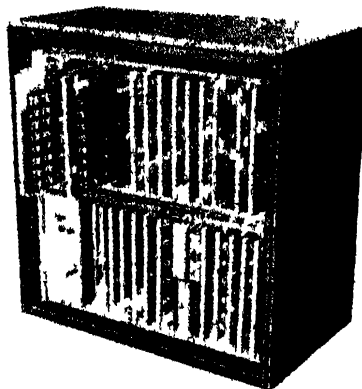


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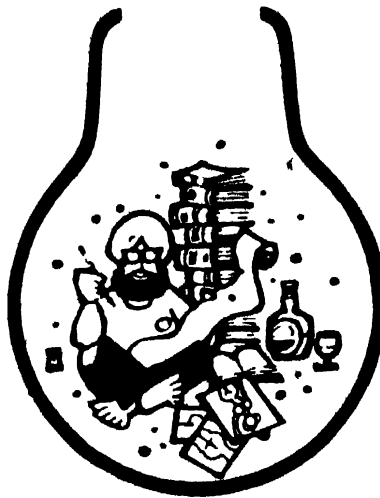
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Maratha Ditch

Every time I am driven in from Dum Dum airport to down town Calcutta and pass over a dyke known as the Maratha Ditch I resolve to find out more about it. Apparently there were quite a few Maratha Ditches in different parts of the city, all wide enough to prevent horses leaping over them and steep enough to prevent horse men clambering up their sides. Contemporary records do not say much about these defensive moats but go into considerable detail on the atrocities committed by the Maratha raiders. It was much the same with the Sikhs who likewise plundered the region extending from the Attock to the Ganga. Both in the cases of the Marathas and the Sikhs, the people sighed with relief when they were cut to size by the British. Sikh incursions were regarded as a calamity. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the paradigm of chivalry according to Sikh historians, was dreaded by the Sikh chieftains of Malwa who preferred aligning themselves with the British rather than serve under their own co-religionist. Maratha operations were on a much bigger scale extending to the farthest corners of India. Any impression that either Sikhs or Marathas were welcomed as saviours or liberators is entirely fallacious. They spared no one. Hindu or Muslim, looted and killed without discrimination. A vivid account of one of these raids is given in *The Maharashtra Purana*, an eighteenth century Bengali historical text (Orient Longman) translated by Edward Dimock and Pratul Chandra Gupta. Of its author, little besides his name, Ganaram, is known.

A Maratha horseman was known as a *borgi* - from the Persian for a soldier who did not own the horses he rode. In an earlier manuscript, *Citra campu* by Vidyalkara, they are described as follows: "They travel a hundred *yojanas* (800 miles) in one day (an obvious exaggeration) killing the unarmed and submissive, women and children, stealing what ever they find, abducting virtuous women, and in the face of battle, quickly and by stealth they escape to another country on their swift horses."

The Maharashtra Purana gives a moral justification to the calamities that befell Bengal in the 1740s: "People of the earth were filled with sin, and there was no worship of Radha and Krishna. Day and night the peo-



ple took their pleasure with the wives of others.' Mother Earth would not bear the burden of such sins and prayed to Lord Shiva for help. Shiva sent his bull Nandi to enter the body of Shahu Raja who then went to Raghuraja and persuaded him to send Bhaskara Pandit with 40,000 horsemen to invade Nawab Ali Wardi Khan's turf in Bengal. The savagery with which they pillaged Bengal is too stark to be related except that their swords spared no one. Every brahman or vaishnava or *sannyasi* whom they saw they killed and they slaughtered cows and women by the hundreds.

These atrocities angered goddess Parvati and she pleaded with her Lord to "be hostile to Bhaskara, be gracious towards the Nawab." The good Lord agreed. Bhaskara Pandit along with his trusted Muslim generals walked into a trap laid by the Nawab and were slain.

So strong was the general revulsion against the Marathas and the Sikhs among the people that it took many decades to wash out bitter memories of their depredations. It was the emergence of nationalist leaders like Tilak and Gokhale in Maharashtra, Lajpat Rai and the Ghadrtees (mostly Sikhs) in Punjab that changed Indians' attitude towards the Marathas and the Sikhs.

Punjab's Debt to Bengal

Not many people know how much Punjab owes to a galaxy of Bengali reformers, teachers and editors for their role in taking Punjabis out of their *jee huzoor*ing the British in the

19th century to an enlightened Indian consciousness of the 20th. First to come were Christian missionaries led by Reverend Golak Nath and his son-in-law Kali Charan Chatterjee. Kali's son P.C. Chatterjee became professor of mathematics at Government College Lahore. P.C.'s son 'Tini' Chatterjee was later director general All India Radio. Another eminent Bengali Christian who made Punjab his home was Radha Raman Raha.

Brahmo Samaj's contribution to Punjab was greater than that of the Christians. It first made its appearance in Lahore in 1863 A.D. Bengali Brahmos brought out a monthly journal *Hari Hakikat* in Gurumukhi, Hindi and Urdu. The leader of this group was Navin Chandra Rai who became vice-president of the Oriental College and registrar of the Punjab University. The Brahmos' greatest achievement was to win over Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia to their ranks. Under Brahmo influence the Sardar set up a college, a public library and *The Tribune* newspaper. A good many of its most distinguished early editors were Bengalis. Its influence in weaning away educated Punjabis from Punjab's traditional loyalty to the *sarkar* cannot be overestimated. Sri Aurobindo referred to this when he wrote "Undoubtedly the new spirit which has gone out like a mighty fire from Bengal lighting up the whole of India has found its most favourable ground in the Punjab."

Before the Bengalis came, a Punjab's notion of paradise was summed up in this doggerel:

Six good bullocks and a wagon
load of rain

A fan rent a square rent a July
rain

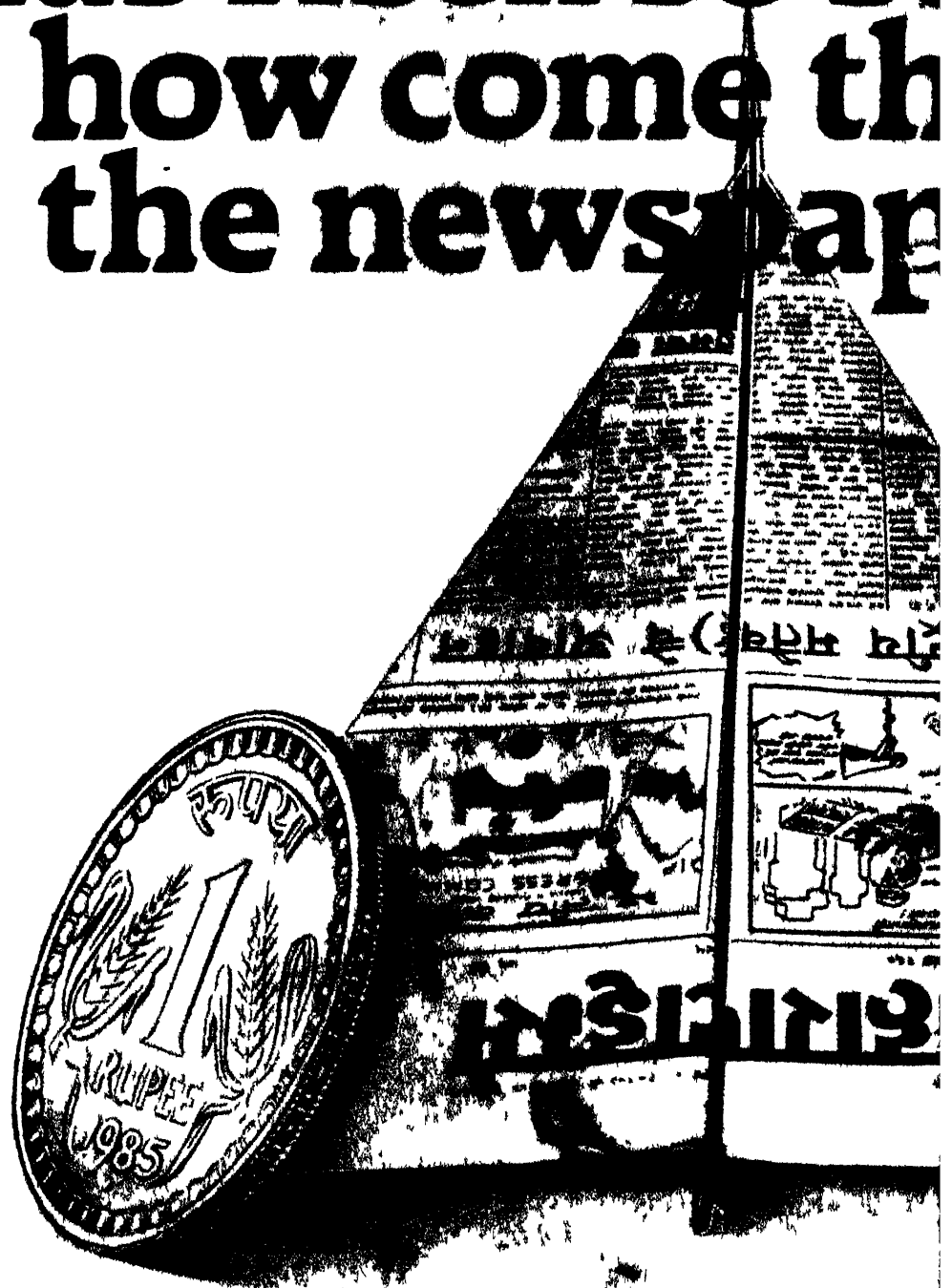
A plover of cows' milk full
brimmed to drain

If God gives me this much, I shan't
complain

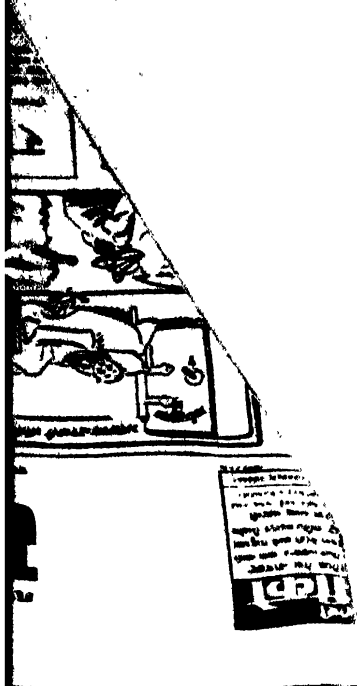
After the Bengali yeast had fermented in the Punjab's dough, we had agitation in cities and villages demanding ouster of the British. By the end of World War I and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (1919) Punjab came to the forefront in the struggle against the British.

If you are interested in knowing about this epoch in Punjab's history, I can recommend Nina Puri's *Political Elite and Society in the Punjab*. It is crammed with information that you will overlook the shoddy job Vikas has done in its printing.

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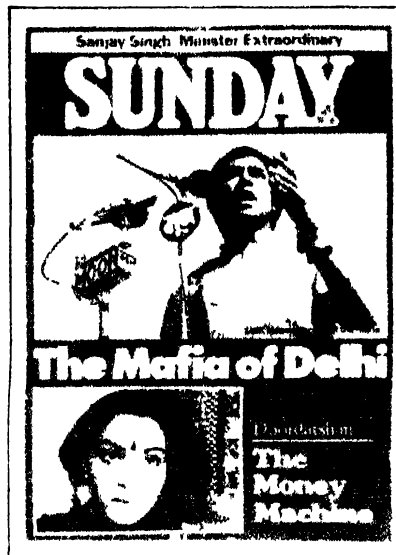
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Dons of Delhi

I was shocked to learn in *The Mafia of Delhi* (18-24 August) by Sankarshan Thakur and Rashmi Saksena that terrorist organisations exist in India and they are actively practising their heinous activities. The acts of these organisations such as the riots in Delhi after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the recent murder of Lalit Maken and his wife have sent shock waves throughout the nation. The so called Mafia should be dealt with an iron hand and wiped out before they cause further damage. *K Chidanand Kumar Bangalore*

• It was not at all surprising to learn that politicians patronise the underworld. It is an open secret that money and musclemen are absolutely necessary to remain in power. *Vijay Thakur, Dhanbad*

• The report was thought provoking. Lalit Maken may have been a revered trade union leader but he did



have a hand in engineering the riots after the murder of Indira Gandhi. For this he had to pay with his life. *Rajesh Sahay Jhumi Telaiya (Bihar)*

Who is Guilty?

Seema Guha has done a commendable job by assessing the situation that led to the border hostilities between the states of Assam and Nagaland in the Merapam sector (*The Border War*, 23-29 June). The government's failure and the dismal performance of the Assam police have raised many significant questions in the minds of the people regarding the efficiency of the state police. With the memory of violent incidents a few years ago at the Chungajan border leading to the ghastly genocide of Assamese inhabitants still fresh in the people's mind it is hard to believe that the Assamese intelligence failed to anticipate the violent incidents regularly occurring in the border areas. There must be something in the suspicion that a few high ups in the Assam police are indulging in all sorts of corrupt practices.

Arun Barooah Guwahati

Ushering in an Era of Unity and Friendship

The cover story *Peace at Last* (4-10 August) highlights the commendable roles played by Rajiv Gandhi, Sant Longowal and Arjun Singh in ending the Punjab stalemate. The overwhelming support of the accord by the Sikhs indicate their longing for peace. The Akali Dal must now work in close coordination with other political parties and the people of Punjab to usher in an era of friendship and cooperation in the state.

Suresh K R Bombay

• SUNDAY gave an excellent coverage to the historic event that took place on 24 July. The sincere efforts of Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal in bringing about the settlement are to be praised. The man behind the scenes Arjun Singh also performed his job admirably. The onus is now on the Sikhs to honour the settlement and thus rejoin the main stream of national life. As recommended by Khushwant Singh Rajiv Gandhi and the Sant both deserve the Bharat Ratna.

A N Veeraraghavan in Bombay

• Much loss of life and property could have been saved had the accord been signed earlier. Due to the inefficient central leadership of the past the country had been heading towards disintegration. The accord saved the country from the

danger of breaking up. The services of people like Madhu Dandavate, I K Gupta and S S Barnala in bringing about the agreement must be remembered. Rajiv Gandhi's consent to refer the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to the Sarkaria Commission despite his earlier rejection for electoral gains indicates his willingness to change his stance in the interest of the country.

M H Rama Bhubaneswar

• The accord appears as a ray of light at the end of a dark tunnel. But it must not be forgotten that unless right steps are taken to implement it, the accord may be rendered meaningless. But for the moment Punjab lives again.

K Seshadri Vasan Jabalpur

• The solution to the Punjab problem seems to be a case of 'better late than never'. It should have been achieved long ago by Mrs Gandhi, but the matter was finally dealt with by her son and successor Rajiv Gandhi.

Debashis Pati Sindh

• The special issue is a superb collection of in depth writing and reportage with excellent photographs. Such issues are the product of bold and forthright journalism and are to be preserved.

Bidya Shankar, Bhagalpur

• SUNDAY's cover story is commendable. It is indeed a tragedy that some were opposing the agreement.

Arabinda Kumar Prasad Sambalpur

• Rajiv Gandhi has fulfilled his election promise of resolving the Punjab problem by reaching an agreement with the Akalis.

Rajesh Prasad Sambalpur

• Ashwini Minerva's article was thought provoking. If untoward incidents continue to occur despite the accord then the government must maintain law and order at all costs. *Subal Chandra Saha Midnapore*

• Sant Longowal has shown himself to be a true patriot by signing the Punjab accord despite the opposition of many of his colleagues. Rajiv Gandhi is emerging as the man of the decade by tackling the problems of Punjab, Assam and Gujarat one after the other.

Chamaru Lal Agrawal Sonapur

• The Punjab accord should be hailed by all right thinking citizens of India. As has been rightly stated, the promise of peace in Punjab was the best gift Rajiv Gandhi could have presented to the nation during his nine month tenure as the Prime Minister. Khushwant Singh has rightly supported the accord.

V N Narayanaswamy Madras

Democratic Monarchs

The disparaging remarks made by Ram Raja Prasad Singh in the interview *The Bomb Blasts Were the Beginning of Our Revolution* (11-17 August) was highly objectionable. Anyone with an elementary knowledge of Nepal's historical tradition and socio-cultural ethos would know all too well how the monarchy in Nepal has always identified itself with the interests of the people and acted as a unifying force in the country. Apart from the glorious examples of ancient times which abound in Nepal's history, the monarchy during the last 300 years or so has withstood the test of time and successfully met the challenges both external as well as internal while protecting the national interests. Right from King Prithvi Narayan Shah who founded modern Nepal, King Gyanendra Bhatta Bir Bikram Shah and King Rajendra Bir Bikram Shah who fought the then British East India Company's forces and saved Nepal's independence, King Tribhuvan who staked his throne to usher in the beginning of a democratic era in Nepal, King Mahendra who expanded Nepal's international relations and introduced the partyless *panchayat* system to the present King His Majesty Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev who declared Nepal as a zone of peace and proclaimed a national referendum on the basis of universal adult franchise to ascertain the wishes of the people about the form of their choice, have all made invaluable contributions to the cause of national independence, democracy and progress of the nation during their respective reign. The Nepalese people have great faith in and respect for their monarch. To say that the monarchy has no role to play in Nepal would be to shut one's eyes to the truth.

C B Humal, minister, Royal Nepal Consulate, New Delhi

Bold Exposure

How Corrupt is Bhajan Lal? (21-27 July) was a bold investigative report. I was stunned to learn that the Haryana chief minister is involved in criminal activities.

G M Noohu Al Jubail (Saudi Arabia)

• By exposing Bhajan Lal, Sunday has proved its bold approach in the field of journalism. Such an effort deserves to be commended by one and all.

S Hussain, Dibrugarh (Assam)

Darkness at Noon



Mahua Roychoudhury: irreparable loss

The sudden death of popular Bengali actress Mahua Roychoudhury was shocking. (Was Mahua Mu-

dered? 28 July-3 August) With her death, darkness has enveloped the studios of Tollygunge and she has left a void which would be hard to fill. When Uttam Kumar died a few years back, the industry somehow survived the crisis. Now with the passing away of Mahua, the leading actress of the Bengali screen, let us see how fast the industry manages to ride over the dark period.

Subrato Kumar Nandi, Dhanbad (Bihar)

• The opening paragraph of *Bengali Films: Then and Now* mentions that Sir Cyril Radcliffe's stab through the map of Bengal in 1974 was perhaps the unkindest of cuts. I fully agree with the view. Sir Radcliffe did not just stab but had cut off both the hands of mother India, Bengal and Punjab. It was a conspiracy to cripple these two leading states of India.

Tufan Mukherjee, Bankura (West Bengal)

Flaunting Democratic Norms

The cover story *Field Marshal NTR* (14-20 July) highlighted the one-man party in Andhra Pradesh. It was painful to read that NTR is misusing his powers. After he was ousted from the chief ministership in 1984, one had thought that he would not dare to commit the same mistakes again. However, things turned out to be different. Back in office, NTR became a dictator. Now he is ignoring the opposition and hobnobbing with the Congress(I).

S C Malakar, Agra

• The people of Andhra Pradesh were happy when N T Rama Rao with his god-like image came to power. The hopes and aspirations of the masses began to soar because they thought that since he had made

million from films, he would not be hungry for money. People dreamt that vices like nepotism, corruption, dictatorship and dishonesty and self-aggrandisement would no longer remain under NTR's reign. But they were sadly mistaken as the Andhra Pradesh CM started misusing power. The vociferous supporter of democracy has been blatantly crushing democratic norms for quite some time now.

Ridhi Rati, Hyderabad

• Since NTR had played a major role in bringing NTR back to power and now it has exposed the administrative failure of the Andhra Pradesh CM, I feel that he will be once again thrown out of office.

A K Das, Dhanbad (Bihar)

Unfolding Tragedy

It was disturbing to learn of the disastrous effect—the poisonous MIC gas had on expectant mothers and their newborn babies (*The Babies of Bhopal*, 28 July-3 August). A rightly pointed out by Ritu Sarin, the effect of the tragedy would be felt by generations to come.

Aryminder Singh, Wazirpur, Calcutta

• The 40 tonnes of lethal MIC gas that leaked out from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal continues to take its toll. Expectant mothers and

babies have fallen prey to one of the world's worst industrial disasters. The children who have survived the tragedy will suffer from physical deformities and ailments throughout their lives. However, proper medical attention could have lessened the sufferings of the victims. The post-mortem of every stillborn child should be conducted properly and the report used to treat expectant mothers.

A J L, Indore

INDIAN CRICKET

TESTING TIME

Will the Indian cricket team be able to return triumphant from Australia again in November? After a superb season in 1984, the team faces a grim challenge in 1985: the all-too-difficult task of saving its hard-won reputation as world champions. Our uninspiring performance at the beginning of the Sri Lanka tour suggests that complacency has already set in. Can we then live up to our image as a world class team?

Will 1985 be the same as 1984? For Indian cricket, 1984 was a vintage year. At the end of the long season which had begun with hope but nearly meandered into disaster, Indian cricket lovers could finally switch off their television and transistor sets, heave a sigh of relief and say, "Hurrah!" Along with the euphoria of unexpected victories, the season left behind, as its legacy, a series of wonderful images of a dusky teen-aged destroyer called Sivaramakrishnan, of Azharuddin's flashing scimitar, of the controlled belligerence of Srikkanth and Kapil Dev, of Ravi Shastri, the champion of champions, and of Gavaskar the greying wizard with a crinkled smile, driving Shastri's newly won Audi into the sunset.

Though a new season has begun the smell of heady victory and the taste of the bubbly champagne remains. To the Prudential Cup and the Asia Cup have been added the Benson and Hedges Cup and the Rothman's Trophy. Once again, the familiar phrases like "World Champions" and "one day kings" are being bandied about. Skipper Kapil Dev, in fact, declared in March 1985 that "we are the champions of the world." But cricket is a funny game. At one moment one is on top of the world riding the crest of the wave. The next moment can find one crashing into the surf brought down by treacherous Mr Poor Form.

The Indian cricketers, despite the fact that many of them have found employment in business houses and

Clockwise from right, Gavaskar has a word for Chetan Sharma before a delivery, opener Srikkanth and Vengsarkar share a joke, and the jubilant Indian team with the 1984 Benson and Hedges World Cup trophy



COVER STORY

banks, have often referred to themselves as professionals. Does professionalism merely mean playing for money? Or does it refer to a state of mind: of a determination to succeed and give off one's best, whatever the circumstances? A true professional does not need a two-week training camp to get himself into shape. Nor does he underestimate his opponents and expect a tour to be a cake walk.

After the performances of the Indian team in Australia and Sharjah early this year, one would have thought that the Indians even at half-strength would be quite a match for the Lankans. But we seem to fare better as the underdogs rather than when we are on top. Our cricketers will find out for themselves, if they have not already, that staying at the top is more difficult than getting there. Who could have imagined that six months after being crowned

"world champions" we would be making heavy weather of a tour of Sri Lanka! It is difficult in fact, to judge whether India is lucky to be playing Sri Lanka in their first outing after a remarkable season last year, or are we just unfortunate?

It is lucky because Sri Lanka is the weakest side in Test cricket and a tour there could give the Indian side an opportunity to pick up their socks again. Moreover, a Sri Lankan tour could provide the Indians an adequate warm-up before we move onto Sharjah and Australia where we will be required to prove, to those who are still not satisfied, that we are indeed the world champions.

It is unfortunate because the Indians are walking tall and it will be difficult to live down an indifferent tour of the Emerald Island. A failure to do well on a tour of any other cricketing nation might be forgiven

but not one of Sri Lanka. If the Indian side fares poorly, it will be only because of complacency on the part of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the over-confidence of the Indian cricketers.

This time, the customary fitness camp at the start of the season was dispensed with and the Indian team arrived in Colombo just two days before the start of the tour. This is, perhaps, why injury problems are now creating worries. Even if we do win, as we ought to, our players will be lacking the expected level of fitness and the cricket they play will not match their actual capabilities.

The selection of the team itself shows that this tour is being used as a trial for the more difficult tour of Australia later this year. Skipper Kapil Dev, in London when his team was announced, aired his displeasure with the selection. As captain, Kapil would definitely have preferred the best team available and on that count, his criticism was well-founded. But then he has accepted the fact that it was obviously an attempt to build up the team for the future. Youngsters are, therefore, being put to the test on a tour where experiments are possible. Otherwise, before the tour got under way, it would have been difficult to explain the omission of Roger Binny and Madan Lal, the heroes of the Prudential and Benson and Hedges Cup victories, and the inclusion of youngsters like Lalchand Rajput, Gopal Sharma, Rajinder Singh Ghai and Maninder Singh.

But apart from the controversy over the selection of the team, another major controversy which has been going on for the last two years remains. This concerns the confusion over Sunil Gavaskar's position in the batting line-up. Skipper Kapil Dev declared that he would like Gavaskar to open, in view of Srikanth's indifferent form, Lalchand Rajput's inexperience and Shastri's unwillingness to bat first. Gavaskar, despite his increasing age (he is 35) is still India's and possibly the world's best opener and Kapil Dev, perhaps justifiably feels that Gavaskar should go in first. But it is Gavaskar who has won the first round: he has forced the team management to select him as a middle-order batsman and his patient 51 in the first Test against Sri Lanka has cemented his position even further.

Gavaskar's transformation into a middle-order batsman is likely to give the tour selectors a major headache. While it would mean having an unsettled opening pair on one



PANCA EAGAR



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COVER STORY



Above. Azharuddin and Kapil Dev in poses of aggression and below, the watchful Ravi Shastri



hand it would also mean having an embarrassment of riches in the middle order with Azharuddin, Vengsarkar, Shastri, Mohinder Amarnath and Gavaskar vying for the four places. Despite the uncertainty, it is in batting that India's strength lies. After Azharuddin's three centuries in the first three Tests against England in 1984-85 and his 93 against Imran Khan's thunderbolts in the Benson and Hedges tournament early this year, there is no doubt about his class. It was Azhar who was the find of the 1984 season and he is already and quite rightly too, being talked of as the best young batsman in the world. When one remembers that Martin Crowe of New Zealand, Pakistan's Salim Malik and West Indian Richie Richardson who has been hailed as a successor to the great Viv Richards are the other highly regarded young batsmen, Azhar's abilities can be seen in a clearer perspective.

Dilip Vengsarkar and Mohinder Amarnath are already seasoned professionals and besides Gavaskar, two of the most prolific Indian batsmen of recent times. Vengsarkar, the stylish strokemaker from Bombay, a man who has learnt to put his head down and grind the bowling into the dust, is already among the runs with a typically elegant touch against the Sri Lanka Colts and a big score in the first one-day international. Amarnath, acknowledged by none less than Clive Lloyd as the finest player of the faster balls, has been more inconsistent. Returning to the Test scene with a changed stance, renewed confidence and a stack of runs in domestic cricket after a skull fracture put him out of test cricket for three years, he hit up five centuries in quick succession. But ill health and an unusual run of poor scores (he was nick-named Donald after his five ducks in six test innings) meant a return to the sidelines. But though "Jimmy" has fought his way back into the side and played a number of brilliant knocks, his ill health persists.

What the Indian batting clearly does not lack is depth with Ravi Shastri coming in at number six and skipper Kapil Dev who can tear any bowling attack to pieces at number seven. The tail, therefore, is expected to wag. Sadanand Vishwanath, the fighting young wicket-keeper who recently took over from Sved Kirmani, regularly opens the innings for Karnataka in the Ranji trophy. Leg spinner Lakshmanan Sivaramakrishnan has a century in first class cricket. Opening bowler Chetan Sharma too, is no mean batsman. But judging by the perform-

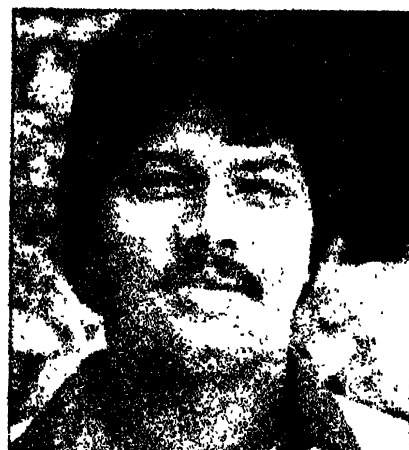
COVER STORY

ances in the warm-up matches and the first Test, it is clear that the top batsmen have not given up their old habits. Their dismissals have been more due to injudicious shots than a difficult wicket or hostile bowling.

The bowling, however, does not inspire the same confidence. Kapil Dev, the side's spearhead and the only match-winning strike bowler, has lost that extra yard of pace. He is still a dangerous bowler, capable of running through the Sri Lanka side but the years of hard labour on dead tracks in the hot sun have taken their toll. The days of miracles as in Melbourne, when with an injured thigh he bowled out the Australians or his 9 for 83 at Ahmedabad against the strong West Indian side, are perhaps over.

While the rest of the attack is perhaps adequate for limited-overs cricket, Test matches, it must be remembered, are a totally different ball-game. Though India has more than her share of bowlers who can bowl a tight, restrictive line, there are few who can bowl out their opponents twice in five days. Chetan Sharma, Kapil Dev's diminutive but nippy partner in head-hunting or Rajinder Singh Ghai will be sharing the new ball with the skipper. After his impressive debut in the first Test in Lahore in 1984 when he peppered seasoned opener Mudassar Nazar with sharply lifting deliveries, Sharma has rarely been consistently impressive. In the last series against England, he had often been punished by the English batsmen for bowling far too short. But that he has potential was evident in the first Test at Colombo. Ghai's selection was obviously a calculated risk. The selectors kept in mind his ability to swing the ball away from the right-hand batsman and occasionally bring it back in sharply. In Sri Lanka, where the level of humidity is high, Ghai is expected to swing the ball prodigiously.

More is expected of the Indian spinners. Vice-captain Ravi Shastri is already a young veteran with over 70 Test wickets and his nagging left-arm spin is going to be invaluable for the Indians. With his high action he is likely to be very effective on a responsive pitch. The other left-spinner Maninder Singh has been more of an enigma. While there is little doubt about his obvious talent (he was once considered the great Bishen Singh Bedi's successor), he has done little to justify his ability at the highest level. His 16 wickets in 13 Tests have come at a cost of 64 and this tour could just be his chance of making good.



Clockwise from top, a pick of Sri Lanka's best: skipper Duleep Mendis, Roy Dias, Rānjan Madugalle and Arjuna Ranatunge. Below: Chetan Sharma (left) and Maninder Singh



Is Kapil Dev Playing For Money?

In all the excitement of the departure of the Indian cricket team to Sri Lanka, what was overlooked was skipper Kapil Dev's unnecessary *ramasha* over the financial losses he and teammates Ravi Shastri, Mohinder Amarnath, Chetan Sharma, Rajinder Ghai and Dillip Vengsarkar incurred by leaving their commitments in England to go to Sri Lanka with the Indian side. The different English clubs were forced to hire other overseas players in the absence of the Indians, who for their part had to forego a part of their wages for leaving mid-season. It was reported that Kapil Dev and the rest lost anything between £800 and £5,000. Accordingly, skipper Kapil Dev took the stand that the losers should be reimbursed, if not with the full amount, at least the fare back home.

It is not clear whether the others involved felt as strongly for the Indian skipper was speaking for himself when he said, "I am a full-time professional. My only source of earning is cricket." This was how he justified his claim. Kapil more or less made it known

that money was his prime objective, apparently placing financial considerations above playing for his country. By taking such a stand, a Test captain does not set a glowing example. Leading one's national team is the ambition of every cricketer, but Kapil Dev has in a way devalued this honour.

One would imagine that Kapil and his colleagues are going to Sri Lanka for peanuts. Each of them will receive Rs 15,000 and Sri Lankan Rs 2,000 a week for expenses. Then there are the winnings from the one-day series, man of the match awards and the rest. They will also get the satisfaction of playing for their country. Kapil Dev should also be reminded that professionalism does not merely mean receiving money for one's labours, it also involves a frame of mind. If he was the kind of professional as he claims to be, with his talent he would be one of the most sought-after overseas cricketers in English county cricket today. Instead, according to knowledgeable sources, he finds it hard to retain his county contract. The only

reason one can assign to this is his apparently non-professional attitude. His inconsistency is something not many professional countries can afford. Not even lowly Worcestershire, especially if they have the choice of other less talented, yet more professional-minded players. The true professional is a man who can do his job even when he does not feel like it.

Money does play a part but a line has to be drawn somewhere. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) did the right thing by not giving in to the whims of the cricketers. As the BCCI secretary, A.W. Kanmadikar, said, "They went to England on their own and not on the Board's behalf." After his immature handling of the reimbursement question, Kapil Dev has done a turnabout. In Sri Lanka he denied having said that he would lose as much as £5,000. However, the grapevine has it that Kapil may seek compensation not for himself but for some young teammates. Has the enigmatic all-rounder realised his mistake?

Clive Andrew O'Brien

Maninder Singh's spin twin, leg-spinner Lakshmanan Sivaramakrishnan has been more successful. Last season, against David Gower's English side, he almost single-handedly won the first Test with a haul of 12 wickets in the match. Siva, though less of a destroyer in the remaining Tests, still commands respect throughout the series. Kapil Dev, however, will have to nurse him carefully. Gopal Sharma, the stocky off-spinner from Uttar Pradesh won his first Test cap at the fag end of the 1984 season after a long wait in the wings.

Yet, on good pitches against Sri Lanka's exciting array of strokemakers led by captain Duleep Mendis, the Indian bowling could wilt. Like the Indian side, Sri Lanka's strength lies in its batting. Sidath Wettimuny and Amal Silva, the openers, got centuries in Sri Lanka's only Test at Lord's. Roy Dias, easily the side's best player, is good enough to find a place in any international side while Ranjan Madugalle, Arjuna Ranatunga and Aravinda de Silva are exciting young cricketers, with the potential of putting the Indian bowling to the sword. But the Sri Lankan bowling, headed by the hard working medium-pacer Asantha de Mel who took five



Azharuddin, Chetan Sharma, and Lalchand Rajput after net practice

wickets in the Indian first innings in the first Test is steady but hardly sensational.

If one judges India's performance, by the reputation we have to live up to, the tour upto the point of filing this report has been disappointing. India barely managed to win the first one-day international, while the two three-day matches against a

mediocre opposition have been dull batting affairs with the visitors rarely in command of the situation. For a team which boasts of having the best batting line-up in the world, a total of 218 runs in the first innings in the first Test was a rude shock. Moreover, six of the Indian batsmen fell to catches behind the wicket, which suggests a recurrence of the tradi-

Ravi Shastri: The Champion of Champions

The flight to Wellington on a cold February morning in 1981 had a surprise passenger. On the plane with butterflies in his stomach and a hastily-packed suitcase was a tall, lanky 18-year-old all-rounder Ravishankar Jaydith Shastri on his way to becoming a Test cricketer. Ace-spinner Dilip Doshi had broken his toe during the Australian leg of the tour and it was Shastri who was selected by skipper Sunil Gavaskar to replace him. Shastri flew in a few hours before the match was to begin, but his first over—an impeccable maiden—confirmed his potential. He finished the match with seven wickets (including three wickets in four balls) in 15 in the series.

In his first Test on Indian soil against England before a home crowd in Bombay, it was his admirable stone-walling which played a major role in the Indian victory. He followed it up with a polished 93 in the Delhi Test. During the series, his batting improved and despite his limited repertoire of strokes (he was primarily an onside player with the flick and the glance his main scoring shots) he made good as an emergency opener in the next series in England. And it was on this tour that he faced the wrath of his critics. He was Gavaskar's protégé, said the critics, and his skipper was grooming him at the expense of the side.

Meanwhile, his bowling was steadily losing its penetration and he was dropped after the first Test against Pakistan in 1982-83. He was reinstated in the final Test as an opener. Shastri celebrating his return, promptly hit an immaculate hundred. His next century came soon after in Trinidad in the West Indies. Runs came easily, even against the mighty West Indian fast bowlers. The Caribbeans were back in the winter of 1983 and it was Shastri, batting at number six who often kept the innings together. He finished the series with 336 runs, the third-highest run-getter after Gavaskar and Vengsarkar. Throughout the series, he was as solid and dependable as ever; never afraid to get in line and always the epitome of caution. Against the bowling—consistently hostile and often intimidatory—Shastri's was a victory of temperament and technique.

But while his batting scaled new

heights, his bowling declined even further. Many now saw him purely as a defensive left-arm spinner who could be expected to keep the runs down while the strike bowlers were resting. He was also used as a bowler who could bowl his quota of overs accurately and economically in the one-day internationals.

But his last season's performance changed all that. With Sivaramakrishnan, India's wonder-boy leg-spinner, Shastri played an important role in the victory in the first Test at Bombay against Gower's Englishmen and in bowling out all their opponents (except Pakistan) in the final in the Benson and Hedges tournament in Australia. In the matches against England and New Zealand in the semi-finals, his contribution with the ball was decisive. On both occasions, he got wickets at vital moments. He finished with eight wickets in the tournament with an average of 20.75. The myth that spinners were a liability in the limited-over matches was rudely shattered.

Shastri's batting too was a revelation. To his normally rock-like defence was added a glittering array of punishing strokes. Gone were the hesitant pushes and prods of the past. With the transformation came the flowing drives on both sides of the wicket and a series of elegant cuts, flicks and glances. He was now a complete cricketer. Against the English, Shastri got two centuries: a magnificent 142 runs in Bombay and a slow but stroke-filled 111 runs in Calcutta. And then, in a local first-class match, came the world record. Shastri hit six sixes in an over, equalling the record held

by Sir Gary Sobers. Each stroke was a powerful heave, coming clean off the middle of bat. It was a display of big hitting his teammates like Kapil Dev and Sandeep Patil would have been proud of. It was also a gentle reminder to bowlers of what this shy, young man was capable.

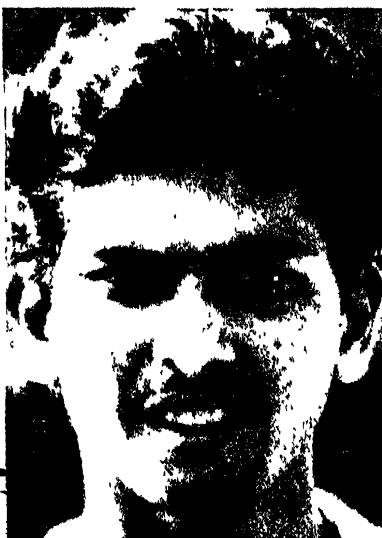
With the swashbuckling Krishnamachari Srikkanth, Shastri formed a successful opening pair. He did his task well: digging himself in to lay the foundations of the innings and taking the sting out of the opposing attack. His 182 runs in five innings at an average of 45 as well as his eight wickets and safe-catching got him two match awards: as well as the title of champion-of-champions and a sleek Audi valued at 40,000 dollars.

His reluctance to open the innings in Test matches, however, is likely to create problems for the Indian selectors. With Gavaskar also opting out of opening, the Indian selectors will have to face two problems: they now have to look for an opening pair as well as decide on whom to leave out among Azharuddin, Mohinder Amarnath, Vengsarkar, Gavaskar and Shastri. Yet, if Shastri opens with the adventurous Srikkanth, it would mean having the right blend of caution and aggression in the opening pair as well as solve the selector's problems about the middle-order batsmen. But Shastri himself admits that he would not be able to perform to the best of his ability if he were to open in a Test.

Within five years of making his Test debut in slightly dramatic circumstances, Ravi Shastri has risen to become one of the most important members of the side. At 23, besides being the sheet-anchor and the senior spinner, he is also the side's vice-captain. He was captain of the Indian schoolboys' team to England in 1981. He led his side capably and with flair. The selectors have not forgotten that. Nor are they unaware of his shrewd mind and his ability to remain ice-cool in a crisis. As vice-captain his occasional tips to his skipper may be invaluable. Despite his good performances and at such an early age, he is a cricketer of the future; clearly a man to watch. And cricket-lovers all over India will be watching his performance in Sri Lanka and Down Under.

Srinjoy Chowdhury

Ravi Shastri: new vice-captain





N. K. Bhattacharya

tional weakness of Indian batsmen the inability to negotiate the moving ball

What is worse has been the failure of the Indian bowlers to get opposing batsmen out. In the two three day matches and the one day international before the first Test Sri Lankan batsmen have scored 1040 runs off the Indian attack which has only captured 24 wickets so far at an average of around 43 runs per wicket. It must be remembered that almost the same bowling side had won seven consecutive one day games against different countries and six times by bowling out the opposition.

But there seems to be hope at last. Indications are there that the Indian cricketers have at last buckled down to their task. The inclusion of Roger Binny probably at the insistence of the captain suggests that the Sri Lankans are not being taken lightly any more. It was his accurate medium pace bowling which had been particularly dangerous both in the Prudential Cup and in the Benson and Hedges tournament. He is also a useful batsman and a magnificent fielder. But more is needed from our macho men who have spent the off season modelling for tee shirts. What is urgently necessary is a return to form by the side's leading batsmen, more penetrative bowling, and razor sharp fielding, something which played a major role in our victories last season. What perhaps is even more necessary is a resurgence of the spirit of 1984, the will to win and the determination to succeed. This season will be the testing time for Indian cricket. It remains to be seen whether the Indian cricketers will continue their run of success or like previous occasions, remember the summer of 42—the slide back to the lowest rung of the international cricketing ladder. Perhaps 1985 will be Indian cricket's moment of truth. As vice captain Ravi Shastri said recently, 'You can be a champion in Australia, you can be a champion in Sharjah, but you still have to prove yourself all the time. The Indian team will have to prove that last season's triumphs were not the result of once in a lifetime surges of adrenalin. After the tour of Sri Lanka which has already begun will follow the Clive Lloyd benefit matches—the three nation tournament—in Sharjah. The tour of Australia also lies ahead. Kapil Dev and Ravi Shastri's colleagues will have to prove once again that India is still "Thunder Down Under".'

Clive Andrew O'Brien and Srinjoy Chowdhury



N. K. Bhattacharya



N. K. Bhattacharya

From above: Vengsarkar, Azharuddin winces at close-in position as a Sri Lanka batsman hits out; and Gavaskar

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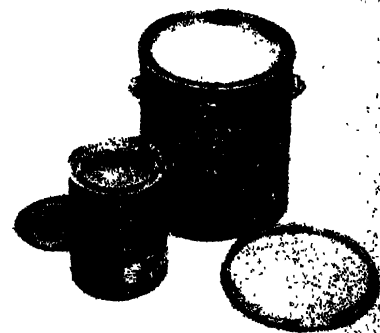
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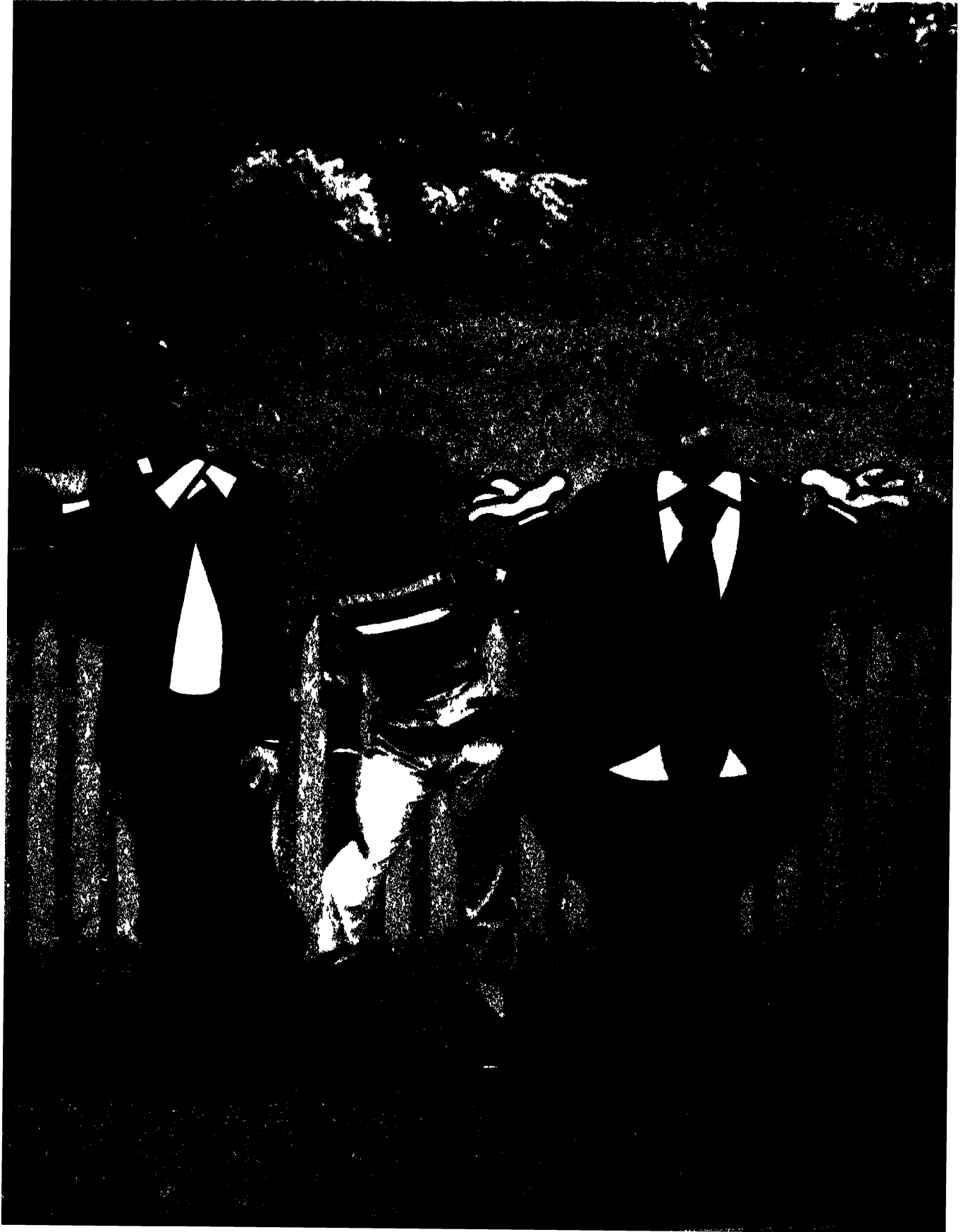
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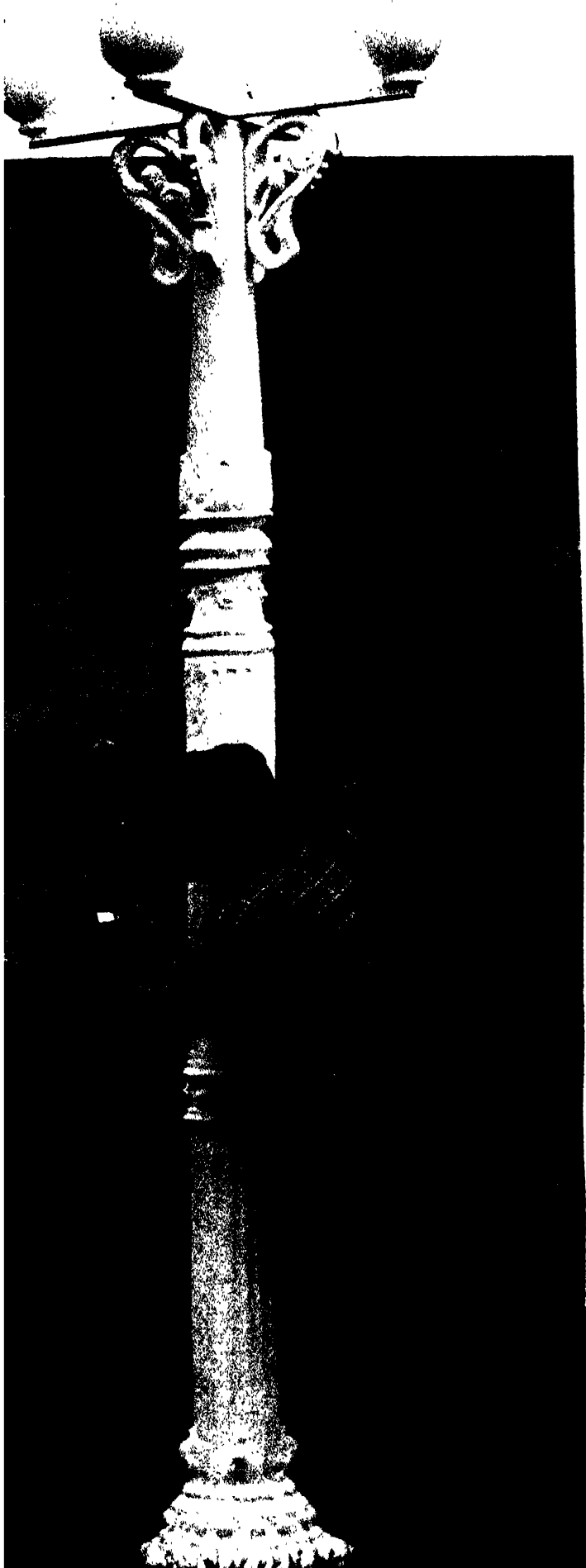
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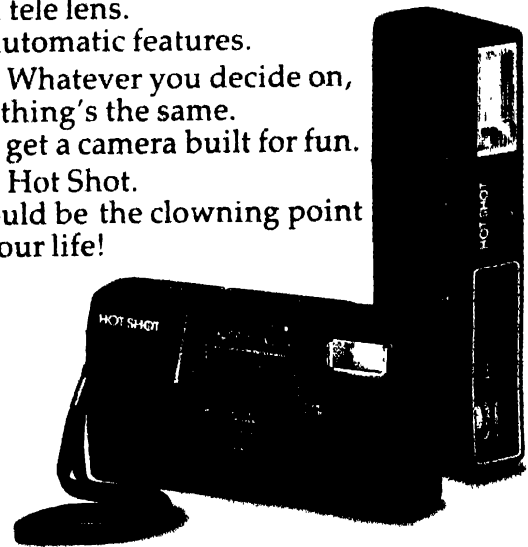
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The Deportation Drama

The Tamils were beginning to feel 'betrayed' by India after it ordered the deportation of three of their leaders. But the situation might have been saved by the return of one of them to India

One day he was an unwanted foreigner and 28 hours later, an honoured guest. His deportation order was revoked on 28 August and he was allowed to go back to Madras his home. For the last two years S.C. Chandrasekaran had been entering Madras on a regular visa. The fire-spouting convener of the Organisations for Protection of Tamils of Eelam from Genocide (Proteg) has come a long way, having changed from a militant who challenged two governments—the US government by refusing to ask for asylum in Boston where he was sought to be deported by the government of India and the Indian government by returning to India despite the deportation order on him. Chandrasekaran became very much like a member of one of the many Indian groups who issue solidarity statements in favour of Rajiv Gandhi whenever he signs accords or takes a controversial political position. But all that changed in the 28 hours. The fiery militant was tamed. Only Chandrasekaran himself and Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, the Congress(I) MP, would know how. The MP, who flew down to Bombay, was the only one allowed to meet Chandrasekaran at the Sahar (airport) immigration lounge, apart from Special Branch personnel. Several hours after the arrival, Chandrasekaran wrote an appeal to Rajiv Gandhi in his own hand: "When I arrived back in India I happened to read in the newspapers that the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi had personally engaged himself in solving the problem relating to Tamils in Ceylon. I believe this will go a long way in finding a lasting solution to the problem. I am confident that Mr Rajiv Gandhi has the interest of Tamils of Ceylon at his heart and that he will endeavour to find a solution that will satisfy aspirations of Tamils of Ceylon. I do feel we should forget some of the unfortunate incidents which had taken place in the near past and should offer our wholehearted support to him in his efforts. (Signed S.C. Chandrasekaran)"

Chandrasekaran clearly sang a different tune from his other fiery col-

leagues. Dr A.S. Balasingham, official spokesman of the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam and S. Saivendra, the Cambridge educated lawyer who represented the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) at the second round of the Thimphu talks who were deported to London and other Sri Lankan Tamils who accused Rajiv Gandhi of betraying them to the Sri Lanka government. They felt they were let down

by the Indian government and did not hesitate to say so. In fact when the Thimphu talks failed and the Prime Minister invited the Eelam leaders on 21 August for talks in Delhi to try and salvage the situation they failed to turn up on one excuse or another. They had to be brought in line because if every one tried to dictate India's foreign policy, there would be chaos. While it is true that India has always supported



LTTE leader Chandrasekaran rejoins wife and son in Madras after the deportation order was revoked

Courtesy: The Indian

"Deporting Sri Lanka Tamils is an Act of Betrayal"

M. Karunanidhi told SUNDAY

Q: What do you have to say about the deportation of the Eelam activists?

A: The deportation is a barbarous act. What crime have the Eelam activists committed to be deported from India? We thought that the central government would be sympathetic to the Tamils of Sri Lanka. But the actions of the central government are harming the Tamils. Balasingham, Chandrahasan and Satyendra have been stabbed in the back by the Indian government. Though the past experience of these men compelled them to believe that the Sri Lanka government was only going to dupe them by holding the peace talks, they nevertheless acceded to Rajiv Gandhi's efforts and involved themselves with the Thimphu talks. Deporting them after they have gone with Rajiv all along is an act of betrayal.

Q: Do you agree that the militants made a mistake in not going to Delhi when summoned by the PM?

A: When 500 Tamils have been massacred, how can the Tamil leaders be expected to participate in any sort of dialogue? No dialogue is possible if the killings are not stopped. Even though Prabhakaran, Sri Sabaratnam, Balakumar and Padmanabha were against the talks, we advised them to go to Delhi (prior to the first round) though they wanted to boycott the talks. They agreed and cooperated so much only because of the persuasion by the Indian government. But in spite of their cooperation Rajiv Gandhi has betrayed them.

Q: Do you think that the deportation heralds the change in the attitude of the Indian government to the Sri Lanka Tamils?

A: In Mrs Gandhi's regime there was some sympathy for the Sri Lanka Tamils—even that is missing now. In 1979, when Mrs Gandhi was out of power she had accused the Janata government at the centre of fostering a relationship with the Sri Lankan government at the cost of the Tamils. But now we find that despite Congress rule the Tamils are being butchered and used as scapegoats.

Q: Why do you think Mr Gandhi took such a pro-Lanka move by deporting these Eelam leaders?

A: We don't know why he is taking such a pro-Jayewardene stand. It could be that he is inclined to take such a stand because the Tamils are not showing their force and might. Because the Tamils have so far remained a passive force, meekly willing to submit themselves to India's advice and actions regarding the Lanka situation, Rajiv Gandhi is now taking them for granted. If the Tamils unitedly emerge as a force resisting any sort of arbitrary behaviour, Rajiv Gandhi will not neglect them. He will be forced to take cognisance of them. In the absence of the Tamils emerging as a strong united force nothing is stopping the Prime Minister from going ahead with these acts of betrayals.

Q: What do you have to say about MGR's silence on this issue?

A: It's been three days now (since the Eelam activists were deported) and so far MGR has not even issued a statement condemning the expulsion. His MPs did not raise the issue in Parliament. The AIADMK's silence is proof that the deportation was undertaken with his concurrence. MGR's statements championing the cause of Tamils are superficial and politically motivated. He is only interested in getting their votes. Hard of heart



Karunanidhi: "People of Tamil Nadu will rise against Rajiv Gandhi"

MGR is not interested in the welfare of the Sri Lanka Tamils.

Q: Why do you feel there is no solution other than Eelam for the Lanka Tamils?

A: After so many massacres how can they be expected to live with the Sinhalese? Assuming that the Thimphu talks yield results, it will be only a temporary solution. The Sri Lanka government and the chauvinist Sinhalese will be hell-bent on taking out their vengeance on the Tamils. For a permanent solution that will ensure the freedom of the Tamils, so that they can live in peace and security, they will have to be liberated from the Sinhalese. Eelam is, therefore, the only permanent solution for the Lanka Tamils.

Q: The centre is worried that if Eelam becomes a reality, the separatist campaign in Tamil Nadu will be revived

A: The situation in Lanka and Tamil Nadu are totally different. The Sri Lanka government is responsible for the heinous crimes against the Tamils. The government itself has sent its army to exterminate Tamils. In Tamil Nadu there is no armed movement. We have a democracy. If people are unhappy or insecure they can vote out a government and bring in a new one which they feel will protect them best.

Q: Has the deportation sown the seeds of hostility in the people of Tamil Nadu against the centre?

A: If the deportation orders are not cancelled, the people of Tamil Nadu will rise in revolt against Rajiv Gandhi and the centre.

Q: You have mentioned in the public meeting that you will be forced to start training camps for the Tamil militants if the centre is not cooperative.

A: No comments.

Q: Don't you think the centre is going to take action against the TESO?

A: We are not bothered. It is only after knowing the consequences fully well that we have got ourselves involved with the Sri Lanka problem. We are prepared to face any eventuality.

Interviewed by Anita Pratap

SPECIAL REPORT

Third World countries in their freedom struggles against the colonial powers, here was India confronted by a Third World country itself, with a group of Tamils wanting to set up their own homeland in this nation.

Deportation orders were served on Balasingham, spokesman of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, S Satyendra of Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation and S C Chandrasekaran of Proteg. While the first two went off to London and issued plaintive statements from there against the Indian government's stand, Chandrasekaran refused to get off the Air India flight at Boston. After conferring with the Indian embassy officials who failed to convince him to stay in the United States, he was put back on the same Air India flight returning to Bombay via Delhi. At Delhi airport where the plane landed in the early hours of Wednesday morning, Chandrasekaran was not allowed to get off despite the pleas of Lok Dal leader Dr Subramaniam Swamy, a Tamilian himself. He was flown into Bombay the same morning and held incommunicado. Lok Dal lawyer Jagdish Shetty in Bombay also tried to contact Chandrasekaran but the police would not allow him to do so. Said Shetty: "Even drug peddlers and smugglers are allowed lawyers when they are detained. Chandrasekaran was not. Shetty filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court asking for cancellation of deportation orders, but before the case could be heard the revocation orders had been issued from Delhi. A group of Tamils also tried to meet Chandrasekaran at the airport but they could not and left."

Chandrasekaran refused to eat any food at Sahar. When it was time for meals he just had fruit juice. When his revocation order came at noon on 28 August, there was barely an hour left for him to be put on the Madras flight. Even then he did not accept any food. He said that he would prefer to go to Madras and then eat.

The deportation orders served on Chandrasekaran, Balasingham and Satyendra on 23 August had supposedly signified a change in the attitude of the Indian government towards the Tamil militants. The crackdown on the militants was evidence of the centre's determination to weed out irritants in the Tamil ranks in order to pave the way for a negotiated settlement of Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis. The Tamils were naturally dismayed at Rajiv Gandhi's swing towards the Sri Lanka government and could not help contrasting his stand with Mrs Gandhi's refusal to deport. Balasingham in spite of

repeated requests from the Sri Lanka government.

On 23 August, at 6:00 pm, a posse of police and immigration officials swooped down on Balasingham's flat and whisked him away to an unknown destination. A leftist intellectual, Balasingham had been a professor of political science at London University before he came to Madras shortly after the July 1983 holocaust to take charge as the official spokesman of the most powerful guerrilla organisation of the Tamils, the LTTE. Born in Jaffna, the 46-year-old Balasingham emigrated to Britain in the Seventies to become a British citizen subsequently. After his arrest, he was kept incommunicado for 24 hours in a house on the outskirts of Madras. After a great deal of explaining, his Australian wife Adele was allowed to be with him as Balasingham is acutely diabetic and needed to be administered his insulin shots quite frequently. On 24 August at 8:30 pm, he was put aboard Air India flight 415 to London via Bombay. S C Chandrasekaran, 43-year-old son of the revered late LTTE leader S J V Chelvanayagam (who was called father of Tamil Eelam) had come to Madras with his wife Nirmala and three small children shortly after the July 1983 holocaust when his Colombo house had been set on fire.

Chandrasekaran began a hunger strike in protest against his deportation and demanded that as a Sri Lankan national he should be deported only to the country of his origin. Mrs Nirmala Chandrasekaran's public litigation petition by way of a telegram on 24 August to the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justice of Tamil Nadu and a telegram to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi praying that the deportation orders be withdrawn went unheeded. The deportation orders for N Satyendra were feeble as he had already left for London. Following the holocaust in July 1983, the 55-year-old Satyendra migrated to Cambridge where he is doing research in labour laws.

The deportation order dated 23 August states that "in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (C) of subsection two of section three of the Foreigners Act, 1946 (Central Act of 1946) read with the notification of the Government of India, in the ministry of home affairs dated 19th April 1958, the Governor of Tamil Nadu hereby directs that Mr Chelvanayagam s/o S J V Chelvanayagam (or Balasingham in the other deportee's case) shall not remain in India." However, as Balasingham said in his last statement on

Indian soil, the order was "politically motivated." Which indeed, it is. The immediate provocation for the deportation was the dilatory tactics employed by the ENLF leaders in responding to the PM's summons and reaching Delhi. This was construed as an act of defiance, something the Indian government wished to nip in the bud. What started the alienation was the ENLF's stubborn refusal to get back to the negotiating table at Thimphu, the withdrawal of the ENLF delegates from Thimphu and the ENLF's decision to terminate the second phase of the Thimphu talks. In a sense, the three Eelam activists aroused India's wrath for three different reasons—Chandrasekaran, for being critical of the ceasefire and the Thimphu talks, Balasingham, for terminating the irrevocable termination of the second round of the talks and Satyendra for fearlessly clashing with Bhandari at Thimphu. Telo sources told SUNDAY that when Bhan-

JUST WHO ADVISED ME TO THROW IT, MAY I KNOW?



dari was high-handedly giving a dressing down to the Tamils, Satyendra objected, pointing out that he (Bhandari) was not insulting merely the delegates but the Tamils of Sri Lanka. He objected to Bhandari's liberal use of the word 'bloody' while expressing annoyance at their walkout.

Moreover, Satyendra addressed the foreign secretary as Mr Bhandari and not his excellency or sir as some of the other Tamil delegates did. Balasingham and Chandrasekaran have been active for a long time. But Satyendra came to India only a few days before Thimphu II began. He attracted attention only when he clashed with Bhandari at Thimphu. The deportation order for Satyendra has therefore lent credence to the belief that the deportation of the Tamil Eelam leaders is the handiwork of Bhandari, who, the Tamils feel, is closer to the Sri Lankans.

SPECIAL REPORT

Balasingham had been expecting a deportation order. For quite some time now he had been threatened with deportation by the Indian authorities in a bid to get him to tone down his criticism. He was always trenchant in his criticism of the shabby proposals put forward by Sri Lanka. Though he never sought to deny India his political moves were calculated to assert the independence of the militants. He was responsible for the political credibility that the ENLF rapidly gained. When the ENLF leaders went to Delhi, it was he who acted as their spokesman—not merely because he was fluent in English but also because he was astute. He also played an important role in explaining the factors that drove the Tamil militants to arms to the world press. By virtue of his theoretical knowledge of political science, he was able to present the predicament of the Tamils cogently and in its proper historical perspective.

A Sri Lanka Tamil family grieving a lost one the massacre goes on



Satyendra being an eminent barrister (the last case he handled in Colombo was the release of Kuttima ni, Jagan and Thambithurai, leaders of TELO before they were killed in the Welikade jail massacre) presented the Tamils' case most eloquently at Thimphu. Chandrahasan also has the same perspicuity of mind. However, except for the TELO to which he is close, all the other militant groups including the PLOT suspect Chandrahasan's *bona fides* as a true champion of the Tamils' cause. They suspect him of having links with foreign intelligence agencies. However, a source close to Chandrahasan said he had earned the ill will of the other groups as he had built up the TELO so that it emerged as a force to reckon with. According to him, PLOT and LTTE turned against Chandrahasan because they felt he was propping up TELO as a rival to them.

The ENLF now concedes that it was a mistake not to have gone to Delhi immediately. A slighted PM construed this as an act of defiance but the delay was due to their fear that they would be forcibly taken to Thimphu to resume the talks. Even if they did not go to Delhi they could at least have sent a letter explaining their fears to the PM through their channels—RAW and IB. Their July visit had convinced the ENLF leaders that in Delhi they were powerless in the hands of RAW which had cut them off from the world. Even if they were forcibly huddled into an aircraft and taken to Thimphu, as they feared they could have registered their protest in so many ways—for example, by fasting as Chandrahasan did when he was deported. SUNDAY learns that the real reason for the ENLF leaders not going to Delhi immediately is that LTTE and TELO, the two most powerful guerrilla groups, were struggling to arrive at a consensus within the ENLF on the stand they should take in Delhi. It was an internal crisis, with the LTTE and TELO unable to convince the EROS and EPRLF, who are more moderate in their approach about the impossibility of resuming talks. As no consensus was forthcoming, ENLF was compelled to delay its departure. After three days of intense discussions, a consensus was arrived at and Balasingham announced that the ENLF would make themselves "available" for a meeting with the PM. Now in Balasingham's absence ENLF has lost a bit of its cohesion and direction.

Whatever the internal dissensions, the events of the last two months are a tribute to the Tamils' unity. Despite the strains and pressures, they

stuck together, enhancing their prestige. SUNDAY learns that even the Indian government was surprised at the unity in the ranks of the Tamils. But the Tamils are unanimous on one score: "We must carry India with our struggle. Without India's support we are crippled."

Meanwhile, reaction in Tamil Nadu to the deportation was swift and intense. The Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation (TESO) comprising the DMK, DK, and TNKC galvanised into action holding public meetings and protest marches throughout the state that attracted spontaneous crowds. Students agitated all over Tamil Nadu forcing the state government to close schools and colleges indefinitely. The DMK mobilised the youth (in 1965 the DMK had sponsored an anti-Hindi agitation by young people, it was this movement that had damned the Congress and stimulated public sympathy for the DMK paving the way for their triumphant accession to power). The anti-deportation agitation by DMK was somewhat similar in that it was directed against the 'betrayal' of the Tamils by the centre. The DMK got into action creating a situation that was akin to the scenario 20 years ago.

In the AIADMK only agriculture minister K. Kalimuthu protested against the deportation. With MGR muzzling his partymen, all criticism from within the AIADMK was stifled. This is the first time after the recent elections that the AIADMK and Congress have been caught on the wrong foot. And the DMK is out to make the most of the situation, though persons like V. Gopalaswamy, the DMK MP, insist that the deportation is an unpardonable blunder. We are not agitating for political gains. We are agitating because we are emotionally involved in this issue. But the DMK agitations did not pose a serious threat, because MGR has always stepped in and pre-empted Karunanidhi's expression of solidarity with the Tamils. But in this instance there was nothing MGR could do to salvage the situation as he himself has compromised becoming vulnerable to allegations of failing to protect the interest of Tamils—indeed a sore point with him because he is a Malayali. He can only try and crush the agitation with brute force which would only worsen the situation. It must be remembered that the call for secession was raised in Tamil Nadu long before the Sikhs were caught in its whirl. In 1963 the separatist slogan was given up in Tamil Nadu only because of the Chinese aggression.

Olga Teltis, Bombay and Anita Pratap, Madras

INVESTIGATION

Peerless: The Curious Investment Company

An Act banning financial schemes and four court battles have not been able to prevent Peerless from growing into a Rs 600-crore money-machine. What are the reasons for its phenomenal growth?

Nothing succeeds like Peerless. Undeterred by obstacles of human and godly design—the closure notice from the West Bengal government, the recent demise of its managing director Bhudh Kanti Roy and the dispute between the management and field officers—the once unpromising insurance scheme started by a schoolteacher in Narayanganj (now in Bangladesh) is today a giant money machine with assets totalling Rs 600 crores, two crore certificate holders, four lakh agents and field officers, 4,000 employees and 37 branch offices spread out all over India. It is a towering monument to rural illiteracy and the pathetic flaw of a legal system wide open to misinterpretation.

Seven years ago, when panicky depositors watched one doomed financial scheme after another (including the notorious Sanchaita Investments Ltd) collapse in the wake of the Prize Chits and Money Circulation Schemes (Banning) Act, 1978, Peerless General Finance and Investment Company Ltd managed to stay in business through a court injunction. Ever since, it has expanded enormously, despite its precarious legal position. In 1979, when it was asked to close down, the company sold 1,375,90 endowment certificates with a face value of Rs 460 crores; the figures for successive years were 1,572,80 (Rs 780

crores) in 1980, 2,445,59 (Rs 1,280 crores) and 3,544,84 (Rs 2,100 crores) in 1982. The company's gross turnover increased from Rs 149.16 crores in 1982 to Rs 160.35 crores in 1983 and its pre-tax profit increased from Rs 4.29 crores in 1982 to Rs 5.35 crores in 1983. Its total assets rose from Rs 327 crores in 1982 to Rs 440.84 crores in 1983. In 1984 it netted in new business worth Rs 2,800 crores and the targets for 1985 and 1992 are Rs 3,000 crores and Rs 10,000 crores, a stupendous projection which poses a threat to the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). All this while there are four cases pending against Peerless in the Calcutta High Court, one concerning the closure notice served on it in which the company has been charged with misleading the public in its advertisements, maintaining an

irregular accounting procedure and a forfeiture clause among other things. In each of the cases the company has got an interim injunction and none of the cases shows any sign of ending yet.

Could there be a special reason for the mordinate delay? In one case the union government itself filed its affidavit in opposition two years after the court had issued an interim injunction to Peerless. The company incidentally advertises liberally in central government undertakings like the railways and claims to invest most of its money in the public sector besides encouraging people to save and thus working tirelessly for the 'nation's good'. Has the government fallen for the bait? The lawyer who had been arguing one of the cases on behalf of the company, Asoke Sen, is

not the union law minister. Even the West Bengal government appeared to have lost its teeth in the dispute after the departure for the USA of its former firebrand finance minister Dr Ashok Mitra.

'Two matters exercised us most about this company,' said a finance ministry official in the West Bengal government. 'One, that its policies are not secure in the way LIC policies are. The latter are backed by status. Second, because of Peerless' forfeiture clause, people do not get their money back. Book-keeping is not a common practice in towns,



Peerless divisional office at Chowringhee, Calcutta. saving or cheating?

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much less in villages." Also the accounting procedure followed in the company's balance sheet—with the first year's subscriptions put down as income—explains the excessive commission (75 per cent of the first year's collections) paid to agents. "The operation of such companies indirectly affects the Post Office and the banks. But the government has stepped in primarily to protect the interest of the people who are directly affected," the official explained.

The other victim of Peerless' rapid growth is the government-owned monopoly LIC, the only company authorised to insure life (Peerless only offers an annually renewable accident insurance cover from the insurance company). In the year ended June 1983, the LIC booked new

benefit insurance offered is a life insurance. This is a simple matter, since most Peerless policy holders (roughly 90 per cent) are gullible illiterates in rural areas.

Said an officer in the income tax department who has personally conducted a study into the working of Peerless: "The company's habit of comparing itself with LIC, which it has done even in its petition against the closure notice (see box), is absurd. LIC is covered by a specific Act, whereas Peerless is not. Do they have the licence to insure life? Peerless has also been using terms which are common in life insurance, like surrender value, actuarial value, paid-up value, endowment, lapse, bonus, revival, etc. Do they have the necessary security?" (Incidentally,

even if he remains alive. In Peerless, if a policy-holder dies, his nominee has two options. He can either accept the 'paid-up value' (that is, the entire sum contributed by the policy-holder, without interest on it) or continue the policy till maturity."

Peerless policies, it is argued, run contrary to the very concept of time deposits, considering the fact that they involve a forfeiture clause and deductions are made from the principal amount while calculating the surrender value (amount due to a policy-holder if the policy is discontinued): policies which are discontinued before or in the twenty-third month lapse without a single paisa being paid to the policy-holder; as for policies which are surrendered, all the policy-holder gets is the paid-up value minus the first year's subscription and 90 per cent of the second year's subscription.

Peerless spokesmen argue that their policies are similar to what the LIC offers under table 21 of its schemes. They even insist that their policies are far more rewarding than LIC's: while a certificate-holder in Peerless would have to pay Rs 77 annually to get Rs 1,100 at the end of ten years, in LIC he would need to put in Rs 85 annually to get Rs 1,000 at the end of the same period. But LIC spokesmen find this an odious comparison: policies under table 21 of the LIC schemes are meant for people who cannot for some reason or the other take out a life insurance policy or are ineligible for it and endowment schemes of this variety account for only 0.3 per cent of LIC's total business.



Wholetime director Sunil Roy: business above board?

business of the face value of about Rs 4,000 crores. Peerless, on the other hand, achieved a target of Rs 2,500 crores for the year ending December 1983. In 1985, it is on its way to doing business to the tune of Rs 3,000 crores. Although LIC spokesmen do not apprehend any direct threat from Peerless, they are concerned about the fact that the company spends much more on publicity than the LIC, and that Peerless schemes are sometimes misrepresented; allowing the company to expand in the manner it is doing would dilute LIC's hard-won achievement to the effect that life insurance today is accepted as a necessity. Peerless agents often mislead prospective depositors (in spite of the claim by the management that agents are expressly told not to do so) into believing that the accident

Peerless has been strongly demanding the de-nationalisation of life insurance on the plea that introducing an element of competition would force LIC to become more efficient).

The West Bengal government, defending its closure notice served on the company on 10 August 1979, argued in court that the existence of a separate Act covering LIC clearly sets it apart from Peerless. Said a finance ministry official: "We have argued that LIC cannot fall within the purview of the 1978 Act since there is a specific Act covering its activities. Peerless had said that if the government could serve notice of closure on them, it should also be served on LIC since it was carrying on 'similar activities.' But there is a difference. In the case of LIC a person gets back his entire amount,

Peerless schemes operate quite simply. A subscriber agrees to pay a certain sum of money over a specified period (a minimum of ten years) and gets back a specified total amount, including interest, bonus, etc. Significantly, Peerless policies offer much lower rates of interest than other recurring time deposit schemes and the rate of return even at the end of the specified period works out to be very low. According to a study conducted by the Reserve Bank of India's non-banking department, the rate of interest offered in various Peerless schemes is between 5 per cent and 6½ per cent compound, as against 9 per cent and 9¼ per cent from commercial banks and National Savings Organisations, respectively. Peerless policies, unlike LIC premia and bank deposits, also offer no tax relief.

The secret of Peerless' phenomenal success—if it can be called that—is the extremely high commissions it

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gives its agents, and their promotions up the ladder with consequent monetary benefits. Quite like the system in insurance companies in the west, a Peerless agent who goes up in the hierarchy, is entitled to a cut from the commissions of his juniors. The company offers its agents a commission of 75 per cent of their first year's collections and sets massive targets for fresh business every year, because the agents are keener to bag new policies than renew old ones.

But there is another side to the story. Said an officer in the income tax department, "For the agent at the village level, getting fresh policies works out to be far more economical than collecting subscriptions for older ones. The agent travels from home to home, but the company never covers his costs of travel. It is always better for him to start new policies for which he gets a handsome reward than travel long distances to collect only Rs 10 or Rs 20." The officer went on to aver that in reality, it is the senior field officers who walk off with the biggest slice of the cake. "I have gone to the villages and seen the small time agents in tears. They have to work so hard for so little, while the field officers lord it over them. It is frankly a thankless job to work for Peerless at the lowest level."

The company can afford to pay a high commission rate to its agents because credits to its revenue account for 96 per cent of the first year's collections. (The four per cent is kept aside for refund to policy holders in the event of accidental death.) The agency system has seven distinct rungs, from top to bottom: senior inspector, inspector, special organiser, organiser, sub-organiser, special agent and agent. At each level, a person may have several others working even directly 'for' him, apart from those whom he controls in the hierarchy. The income of an agent, therefore, varies with the circumstances. At the lowest level, an agent could be making something like Rs 100 a month (he gets a commission of roughly 25 per cent, after deducting the cuts for his 'seniors'); whereas a senior inspector could be making as much as Rs one lakh a month, with a commission of one per cent from the earnings of agents directly under him, and half per cent from the collections of others under him in the hierarchy.

A large number of overzealous agents get business by simply misusing authority. Many who buy Peerless certificates, especially in offices and establishments, are actually obliged to accept policies in ex-

change for 'favours from above'. The RBI report confirms this. "Business is drummed up by means that do not look above board. For example, many of Peerless' agents are housewives whose spouses occupy positions of power. This offers ample scope for them to canvass deposits by the use of their husbands' official position." The agent is also often an influential person or his close relative, a man with the right connections. He could be a politician (like the Congress I leader and former West Bengal minister Sushil Dhara), or a retired government official whose links are useful (like M Mazumdar, N C Dutt and K D Basu from the LIC, and Nripen Mukherjee from the United Industrial Bank). No wonder a former Calcutta police

•The company's accounting procedure tends to understate its liability to depositors, the claim that its deposit liabilities are more than covered by its assets thus appears fallacious.

•The company benefits from an excessively high lapsation of its savings schemes. In 1979, the rate was 48 per cent, actually, it is said to be much higher now.

•The high lapsation rate results largely from the system of incentives to the field staff, who are given maximum encouragement to bring in fresh business but not renewals.

The wholtime director's replies to the allegations against Peerless were occasionally uncertain and irrelevant. On the charge of using

What the Agents Get

Post	Eligibility for promotion to next rank	May recruit	Progressive multiplication of agents in network	Percentage of commission on first year's subscription
Agent	Collection of first year's subscription for Rs 6,000	—	—	30
Special Agent	Collection of first year's subscription for Rs 25,000	15 agents	1+15=16	25
Sub-organiser	Collection of first year's subscription for Rs 80,000	6 special agents and 5 agents direct	6x16+5=126	20
Organiser	Collection of first year's subscription for Rs 2,00,000	5 sub-organisers	5x126=625	15
Special Organiser	Collection of first year's subscription for Rs 4,50,000	4 organisers	4x625=2,500	10
Inspector	As and when the special organiser under him is promoted as inspector	2 special organisers	2x2,500=5,000	5

Note: Not for the agent no field worker is supposed to bring in collections directly. His job is to motivate those below him.

Source: Business Standard

commissioner Debi Roy is the company's chief security adviser.

Income tax officials who have studied the working of Peerless confirmed that while a large number of policy holders are illiterates from rural areas whom the agents persuade to 'save', a sizable number in the cities are literally forced into subscribing, almost by way of extorting a *chanda* (donation). Subscribers are often lured with promises of loans. "The agents in these cases are local toughs," said an official. A large number of policies are for small amounts between Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000, and invariably lapse before the second year. (According to agents in Peerless, the actual lapsation rate is more than 70 per cent.)

Other charges against Peerless in the RBI report are

terms that are common in life insurance, Sunil Kumar Roy said, "Terms such as surrender value, paid up value etc are not the monopoly of LIC. The dictionary gives their meaning. They do not apply to LIC only." What about the high lapsation rate of Peerless policies? "Actually, if you see, our lapsation rate is not high. Our policy holders can revive the policies before they mature. In other instances, after a certain period they lapse." Could he deny that the agents cashed in on new policies and did not often renew old ones? "Not any more. For the last three years we have been giving incentives for achieving a certain target of renewals, too." Why did his company insist on comparing its schemes to those under table 21 of the LIC schemes, which form a minuscule proportion of

Controversies in Court

The legal debate over Peerless continues endlessly

One of the cases in the Calcutta High Court in which Peerless is pitted against the RBI, union government and government of West Bengal concerns the legality of its inclusion within the purview of the 1978 Act banning prize chits and money circulation schemes. The company argued that the Act does not apply to it and contested the closure notice served on it by the state government. The case has dragged on for six years now, and, as a top ranking Peerless agent said, "will go on for another ten years."

Peerless' petition stated that the business of the company and the transactions entered into by it are not transactions or schemes contemplated by the definition of 'money circulation scheme' or 'prize chit' in section 2 of the 1978 Act. The West Bengal government's closure notice served on Peerless on 10 August 1979, it said, was issued illegally and offends the rights guaranteed to the company by Article 305A of the Indian Constitution. "In the event it (the company) is held to be within the purview (of the 1978 Act)," the petition stated, "the action of the respondents in issuing notice...is discriminatory and offends Article 14 of the Constitution (fundamental right to equality)." Expounding this point, the company's lawyers argued that if Peerless was to close down under the 1978 Act, the Life Insurance Corporation of India, too, should be ordered to wind up since it was carrying on similar business. The 1978 Act, they said "imposes unreasonable restrictions on the rights of the shareholder company (and) offends Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution (the freedom to carry on trade and business)..." An interim injunction was issued in favour of the company, restraining the state government from giving effect to the provisions of the 1978 Act with regard to Peerless.

In 1980, the State government filed its affidavit in opposition. "The petitioner (Peerless) carries on business collecting money in lump sum or in periodical instalments for a specified period from the members of the public and invest the same. After the specified

period, or during such specified period, the petitioner will return the money so collected either periodically or in lump sum either with interest or with dividend or with bonus or in whatever name called to subscriber. I say that precisely such types of collecting money and return thereof are covered by the definition of prize chits given in Section 2(e) of the said Act..."

The state government denied that Peerless had been "singled out for hostile discriminatory treatment or that any of the rights guaranteed by Article 14 of the Constitution had been infringed by the said notice." It also pointed to the company's "peculiar accounting procedure under which the first year's collections from certificate-holders are credited to profit and loss account and not shown as liability to the certificate-holder in the balance sheet." As a result, it said, the liability of the certificate-holder as disclosed in the balance sheet does not reflect the actual amount collected from the subscriber.

In the case before the MRTPC, which Peerless has challenged in the Calcutta High Court, the company faces some crucial questions. The Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) alleged that the company does not mention in its advertisements the fact that it has been served a notice of closure by the state government; that the lapsation rate of its policies (48 per

cent in the first year itself) increased the disillusionment of subscribers (in 1983 alone the total amount that lapsed is estimated to be around Rs 134.58 crores). The RBI in its inspection report published sometime back had found the company's trade practices objectionable and irregular. The CERC complaint says that as Peerless covered about 17 million families, of which 15 million were in rural areas, the charges were a serious matter. What is worse is that even on comparative merits and without consideration of income-tax reliefs, returns on the deposits with Peerless are very poor compared with the Unit Trust of India, commercial banks, cooperative banks and Post Office. Paragraph 6.5 of CERC's submission to the MRTPC states, "The claim of Peerless that it offers 'attractive returns' is also untenable...on a total amount of Rs 12,000 deposited, Peerless returns only Rs 19,306.23 whereas a cooperative bank returns Rs 25,080.00." The petition goes on: "Neither are the schemes 100 per cent secure...as per the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1981, all deposits in commercial banks are compulsorily insured. Under this insurance scheme every depositor will be entitled to get back upto Rs 40,000 in case the bank fails...No such security is available in the case of depositors/certificate-holders of Peerless, who would rank as an unsecured creditor, should the bank fail."

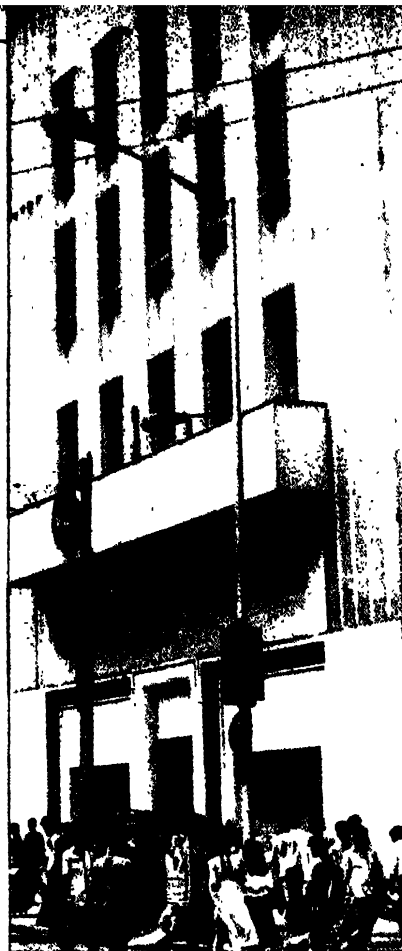
The CERC petition went on to state that a Peerless policy, while being "given a semblance or appearance of a life insurance policy, is basically in the nature of a revolving deposit scheme, like that of commercial banks and National Savings Organisation. In spite of this, not only the rate of return offered is lower than that of a bank or National Savings Organisation, but the policy is subject to a number of conditions and restrictions which are not found in the policies of the National Savings Organisation."



Police guard the Court house after the judgement of the 1978 Act.

LIC's total business? "We are comparing our policies with those of table 21 because they are of the same type. They involve no life risk. And since they are the same type, why not give our policy-holders an income tax rebate too?" Why does Peerless offer lower interest rates than other government savings schemes? "Our main purpose is savings and accumulation of funds. We do not invite people to invest. For investment, the minimum amount would be Rs 1,000." How did he explain the unrest among field officers? "In a large family, brothers fight with each other, and the parents resolve the matter. It's just like that. We have now come to an agreement on what they were demanding—the semblance of a salary at certain levels."

Roy supplemented his answers with some publicity literature in a brochure: "Nineteen million Indians are Peerless certificate holders. Every one of the 19 million Peerless certificate-holders contributes to the building of a better India because over Rs 600 crores saved through Peerless upto June, 1985, is invested in government custody to help realise national priorities; Peerless has created self-employment for over 3,50,000 persons without any outside help. Peerless offers full refund on certificates surrendered after seven years. Peerless puts every paisa of the certificate-holders' funds in government custody—fixed deposits and GP notes—in nationalised banks for 100 per cent security. Peerless is permitted to withdraw this money to pay certificate-holders only not for any other purpose. The security of the small man who saves through Peerless is thus total. The Company's procedure of treating the first year's subscription as revenue account is perfectly scientific. Even after doing this the certificate holders' interest remains fully protected, because the social welfare scheme fund at any particular point of time, together with future subscriptions—that is all second and subsequent years' subscriptions accumulated with compound interest at a certain rate as specified by the actuary—will be sufficient to meet all kinds of claims such as maturity value or paid-up value i.e. contractual liability to the certificate-holders. At Peerless every discontinuation does not mean forfeiture. The company allows the facility of an automatic non-forfeiture clause on just two years' completed subscriptions. At Peerless, a discontinued certificate can be revived even without payment of arrears of subscription, as per special revival schemes." (sic)



Peerless' head office in Calcutta. Sujit Ghosh

"Some people say that our rate of interest is moderate," the brochure goes on. "The company invests the entire certificate-holders' funds in government custody, where returns are modest but security is total. It would be unscientific for the company to offer higher rates of interest, than it can earn from investment in government custody. Such priority to safest investment is far more important, in the public interest than earning the higher interest" (sic)

Having grown to the position of India's 'largest non-banking savings company' (a permanent line in its advertisements), Peerless is now faced with the gigantic task of managing itself. The death of its former managing director, B.K. Roy, a moving spirit behind the company, has made the task even more difficult. To add to the confusion, there was talk of a succession struggle between the chief agent Ashoke B. Choudhury, who controls the company's agents and field officers, and Sunil Kumar Roy, the wholtime director and brother of B.K. Roy. Choudhury, who owns the Ityadi group of publications and has assumed the leadership of the 35,000-strong Peerless Field Officers Association (PFOA), claims to give the company 80 per cent of its business and complains that he still

does not hold a single share. S.K. Roy dismisses this talk lightly; Choudhury, he says, should be grateful to the company for having been so richly rewarded for his work.

Choudhury's field officers have been giving the company enough trouble. They have been agitating for quite some time for regular payment of commissions and other benefits, and had threatened to boycott work for an indefinite period from 17 July unless the management accepted two of their primary demands. These are a permanent allowance of Rs 1,500 per month to each senior inspector and inspector at the completion of five years of service, and the continuance of the present rates of commission, regardless of the permanent allowance. For some time, the management was reluctant to negotiate. On 4 July Choudhury declared that the association's members would *gherao* their respective branch managers throughout the country and make representations to the chief ministers of all states they had offices in.

Soon the management yielded. A settlement was arrived at. The company agreed to pay a retainer of Rs 750 a month to those earning monthly commissions of Rs 0-500; Rs 1,000 to those earning Rs 501-1,500 and Rs 1,200 a month to those earning Rs 1,501 and above. The retainer was essentially meant to cover costs of travel, which are considered to be highest at the inspector/senior inspector level.

Peace may have returned to Peerless but will the government consider taking over or indirectly controlling it? For one thing, the company has tremendous potential to be a source of funds in the Seventh plan, under which the government plans to muster an astronomical Rs 1,80,000 crores. Says A.B. Choudhury, "In this country, people are not in the habit of saving. They can only be persuaded to save by campaigning from door to door. Banks and others cannot afford to do this. So Peerless should be exploited. It is the only company with such a network of agents."

The fact is that the demand for nationalising Peerless has been growing louder of late. The Peerless Employees Union had urged the West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu to persuade the centre to take over the company "in the larger interest of millions of certificate-holders, lakhs of field staff and employees" who were in a state of uncertainty over the fate of the cases. Will the government step in?

Nirmal Mitra, Calcutta

SPECIAL REPORT

Punjab Countdown to the Polls

While intra-party dissension over the question of boycotting the elections has divided the 'United' Akali Dal, the Congress(I) and the Akali Dal(Longowal) are gearing up for the crucial battle of the ballot

Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the militant Sikh leader, is dead but his *hukam* (order) is still strictly followed and hence the decision of the "United" Akali Dal (UAD) to boycott the Punjab polls. To quote Jagjit Singh Rode, the eldest brother of Bhindranwale, "*Mahapurakhan* (the title by which Bhindranwale is addressed by his followers now) *he saneha pheja see kee assi chon na laae* (the great man had sent a message that we should not contest the elections)." Mr Rode conveyed the message of his younger brother, now both a legend and a cult in Sikh politics, during a meeting of the UAD leaders in the party office within the Golden Temple complex convened to take a final decision whether the party should participate in the elections in Punjab or not.

Jagjit Singh Rode, now a senior functionary of the UAD and a member of the party's nine member *ad hoc* committee with Baba Joginder Singh as the acting convenor, used the *saneha* of the *Mahapurakhan* (the message of the great man) as the

trump card when he found that the party leaders were almost evenly divided on the question of taking part in the Punjab polls. Followers of Bhindranwale from the Damdama Sahib Taksal of Chowk Mehta in Amritsar district, and leaders of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), the UAD secretary Surat Singh Khalsa and Jagjit Singh Rode were opposed to contesting the elections. Retired general Narinder Singh, one of the many senior superannuated army officers who came under the spell of Bhindranwale and who was present at the UAD meeting also advocated a boycott of the polls.

But then there were the power hungry Akali leaders like Atma Singh Parkash Singh Majitha Ujjagar Singh Sekhwan Mohinder Singh Sarupwala and Mohinder Singh Samvwal, all Prakash Singh Badal's men in the UAD who unequivocally favoured taking part in the elections.

The Baba who presided over the meeting of the UAD *ad hoc* advisory committee and convenors of the dis-

trict units on 25 August patiently listened to the views of party colleagues. At the end of the meeting, the aged leader was empowered to take a final decision on the issue within two days. At this point Jagjit Singh Rode conveyed the "message of the *Mahapurakhan*" to a group of party leaders. Soon the word spread that *Teerwala Baba* (another title by which Bhindranwale is popularly known) had ordained that the party should boycott the polls. It is an open secret that the followers and admirers of the militant Sikh leader still do not believe that he is dead. They say that "he sends messages and orders to us. He is fine and soon he will reappear." According to highly placed intelligence sources, Sikhs residing abroad who were interested in ensuring that normalcy did not return to Punjab pressurised Baba Joginder Singh to boycott the polls.

Two days after the crucial meeting, Baba Joginder Singh announced the boycott of the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Punjab in a signed statement issued from the party office. Surat Singh Khalsa, the UAD secretary and a close confidant of the Baba, issued the statement at a press conference in the party office on the afternoon of 28 August. The Baba had left the temple complex minutes before his much awaited statement was issued to the press.

The Baba's statement announcing the party's decision to boycott the Punjab polls began with a reference to the agitation launched by his son, Sant Bhindranwale, on 19 July 1982. Bhindranwale had started a *marcha* demanding the release of the AISSF president Bhai Amrik Singh and Baba Thara Singh, the manager of the Gurdwara Gurdarshan Parkash at Chowk Mehta which had been the headquarters of the militant Sikh leader. While Amrik Singh was arrested from the Amritsar district courts on 19 July, Thara Singh was taken into custody the next day also.



Bernala (left) and Baba Joginder: battle lines drawn

SPECIAL REPORT

from the district courts Both Amrik Singh and Thara Singh were among the close confidants of Bhindranwale

Baba Joginder Singh listed the following reasons for boycotting the Punjab polls

- During the storming of the Golden Temple by the army on 3 June 1984, 2,500 copies of the holy Guru Granth Sahib were set on fire besides damage to the Harimandir Sahib and Akal Takht Moreover, thousands of innocent children, men and women including members of the Damdama Sahib Taksal and members of the AISSF were killed in the action

- The anti Sikh riots in Delhi and other parts of the country after the assassination of Indira Gandhi

- The persecution and even killing of Sikh soldiers who left their barracks after hearing about the attack on the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht

After the decision of the UAD not to fight the polls, the question uppermost in the minds of the people in the troubled state is will the followers of Bhindranwale and the AISSF boys disrupt the polls? Said Rajinder Kaur, the Istri Akali Dal president and daughter of the former Akali chief, Master Tara Singh, "I apprehend large scale violence during the election I won't be surprised if many candidates are killed"

The "United" Akali Dal's decision to boycott the polls has turned out to be fatal for it as a political party. For, despite the warning by Surat Singh Khalsa secretary of the UAD, that "strict action" would be taken against those who contested the elections in violation of the party's directive, many MPs and MLAs of the UAD have already approached the Akali Dal (Longowal) for tickets In fact, according to sources, some supporters of Prakash Singh Badal in the UAD are believed to have expressed their desire to return to the Akali Dal (Longowal)

At the time of filing this report, the split which seemed imminent in the "United" Akali Dal over the question of participation in the forthcoming elections in Punjab on 25 September became a reality when Jagdev Singh Talwandi and his supporters left Baba Joginder Singh to contest the elections on their own Announcing the decision of the partymen, Jaswinder Singh Brar told newsmen that a former minister Rajinder Singh Cheema had been made the acting president in place of Talwandi Mr Brar also said that his party would contest all the Punjab Lok Sabha seats as well as 11 Assembly seats in the elections.

Meanwhile the *mela* is back at 24, Akbar Road, the headquarters of the AICC(I) in New Delhi Makeshift tea stalls, vendors hawking *pakoras* and fruit chats, the familiar old man dusting the framed portraits of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi every time such an occasion comes, cars parked bumper to bumper, Congress(I) bigwigs buzzing in and out and the hundreds of ticket seekers and their eager hangers on jostling to enter a general secretary's room—all lend the *mela* its character Not all the guns and threats not all the blood spilt in Punjab seemed to have deterred the Congressmen Nobody could tell from their numbers and spirits that politics was a hazardous business in Punjab Even those in charge of scrutinising the applications were taken by surprise Re marked a joint secretary of the AICC(I) "I had never expected so many to turn out we have almost been flooded" Indeed considering that only one state was going to the polls, the crowd at 24, Akbar Road was a record of sorts almost competing in numbers with the one that had flocked to the party headquarters in March when Assembly elections were held in 11 states The way the party high command went about selecting the candidates belied all rumours floating around that the Congress(I) would only put up a "token fight" as part of a "secret understanding" with the Akali Dal (Longowal) The impression one got was that the ruling party at the centre was serious about contesting the elections

From the initial stages of the complex ticket distribution process adopted by the AICC(I) the role of the Punjab election committee (PFC), which was supposed to have forwarded candidatures to the high command, was relegated to the background Instead, the responsibility of screening the aspirants was given to three joint secretaries of the AICC(I) Tarun Gogoi, Jagdish Jyoti and P Chidambaram All supervising the overall scrutiny, were the AICC(I) general secretary, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai and RS Sparrow, president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee The obvious reason for the dilution of the role of the PFC was that the unit—full of people who have their axes to grind in Punjab—was not impartial in its treatment of prospective candidates The party high command had in fact received several complaints to this effect by groups which had come to New Delhi

The criteria for the selection of candidates for Punjab was slightly different from the one used during

the Assembly elections earlier. To be sure, the Congress(I) had not abandoned its search for "young, clean, dynamic people who will form a new breed of politicians," but as far as Punjab was concerned they also wanted to be "sure of the recent records of the people" A significant part of the interview time was devoted to questions about a candidate's views on extremism, his role in the state in last four years and his views on how to counter terrorism

Though not many political observers have been surprised by the determined bid of the Congress(I) in Punjab, several of them were apprehensive of what could be the outcome of such a policy The thinking among a section of the opposition leadership which has participated in several rounds of talks with the Akalis was that the Congress(I) could indeed coast to victory in Punjab "I cannot but wonder what might happen in the state if the Congress(I) were to come to power in Punjab again," said one senior opposition leader The announcement on 28 August that the "United" Akali Dal led by Baba Joginder Singh was going to boycott the polls had made the situation more complex It meant that even after the elections there would remain in Punjab a section which would refuse to accept the results

The opposition parties, in disarray and overtaken by the rapid developments in Punjab, were still searching for a slogan What would they tell the people? The main issues of the Punjab poll are expected to be terrorism, the Punjab accord and the assassination of Sant Longowal, subjects on which the Congress(I) and



B.S. Ramoowalia (centre), former Akali Dal MP, discussing poll strategies with party workers at Longowal village

"The Sikhs Want Me to Join Politics"

Bimal Khalsa, widow of Mrs Gandhi's assassin, Beant Singh's, told SUNDAY

Q: One has heard a lot of talk that you will be joining politics. Is it true? Has any political party approached you yet?

A: Yes, some people from the "United" Akali Dal and the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) came to me in this connection. Sikhs in general want me to join politics.

Q: Can you name some prominent leaders or members of political parties who have met you and asked you to join them?

A: No prominent personality has come to meet me. Even if they had, how could I ask them their names?

Q: Which political party would you like to join?

A: I have told those who approached me that the Akali Dal and the "United" Akali Dal should merge. If such an unity does take place I shall like to contest the elections on their behalf. I would prefer to be an independent candi-

date (if the two parties do not unite).

Q: Where would you get the funds to contest the election as an independent candidate?

A: Bathere Sikh masses ne paisa den nu, te AISSF ne vee menu kahia hai ke mein kisse wallon vee kharee ho jawan woh meri madad karange (There are a number of Sikhs who will give me the necessary finance. Apart from this, the AISSF has also assured me of financial support if I contest the elections, no matter which party I represent).

Q: What do you propose to do for the people of Punjab if you are elected?

A: I will serve the panth. Panth jo kahega asin karange (Whatever the panth desires of us, we will obey).

Q: Surely you would like to do something for the people of Punjab if you win the elections. Have you any concrete plan you would under-

take for the people?

A: Dekho ji main taan sirph sewa he kar sakdi haan, hor mere kol kuchh nahin. Merako wada nahin. Jo vee sewa panth de ho sakegi kareng (I can only serve. I have nothing else to give. I don't make any promises. Whatever service I can render to the panth, I shall willingly do).

Q: Where would you like to contest from?

A: From Chamkaur Sahib in Ropar district. It is a reserved constituency and since I am a Ramdasi Sikh (a backward class), I qualify for the seat.

Q: To digress a little. A question about your personal life: how is life without Beant Singh?

A: Marne wala taan mar gaya bhugat to main rahin aan ya mere bachhe (The dead is gone and now the problems are being faced by me and my children).

Q: Do you think what your husband did was justified?

A: Ohna nu te vaheguru ton ju hukam hoa oh puri kitta (he obeyed the orders of God). But for God's orders, who would think of doing something that would separate him from his children forever? A man who had never raised his hand against anyone could not have thought of lifting a weapon unless desired by God.

Q: What do you think of the Punjab-centre accord?

A: The Sant (Sant Longowal) should have stuck to the precondition of release of all Sikhs in jail. I feel the accord is good. People are quite happy about it.

Interviewed by Rita Sharma, Chandigarh



Bimal Khalsa with her children at home

the Akali Dal (L) would be the principal voices. But to be fair to them, the opposition parties had no great illusions about the Punjab elections either. The CPI and the CPI(M) had decided only days after the announcement of the polls that they would forge an alliance. Keeping in mind the pockets of influence that the CPI has in Punjab, such an approach seemed prudent. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had decided to contest 25 of the 117 Assembly seats and four of the 11 Lok Sabha seats from Punjab. The Janata Party wanted to have an alliance with the Akali Dal (L) but the confusion in the

Akali ranks left them confounded. The Lok Dal was more concerned about the candidature of former Haryana chief minister, Devi Lal, who had only recently resigned from the Assembly in protest against the Punjab accord, from Meham. As one opposition leader remarked: "Talk of the opposition's attitude to the Punjab poll is the same as talking of the stakes of the Gomantak party (Khobragade group) in Punjab."

Meanwhile, perhaps unsure of the law and order situation in Punjab, the chief election commissioner, R.K. Trivedi asked for assurances both from the union home ministry and

the Punjab government on the peaceful conduct of polls and the safety of candidates. Senior opposition leaders have protested against the lack of security in the state in the wake of the assassination of Sant Longowal and said that campaigning for them might be difficult. Their argument was that though people like the Prime Minister can afford to go out with the massive security screen around him, it would not be so easy for the opposition leaders and party workers to go around in Punjab.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar
Rita Sharma, Chandigarh
and Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

CONVERSATION

"The Disenfranchisement is Unconstitutional"

Hiteswar Saikia, chief minister of Assam, told SUNDAY

Q: Mr chief minister, are you really happy with the accord?

A: The accord is nice. A very good accord. Yes, I am happy.

Q: But you had to dissolve the Assembly. You will perhaps lose a large part of the minority votes, your own partymen are dissatisfied...

A: Till now, we have not been able to explain the accord in its proper perspective. Minorities will not lose anything. In fact, they have gained much. We have to make them understand this fact. For the first time, we have been able to regularise all the minority people. That is, those who came to the state up to 1970. For the present of course, it is those who came before 1966 (who will gain). But after ten years, it is up to 1970. That is, when the brief period of disenfranchisement will be over, all who came to Assam up to 1970 will be regularised. Minorities—both religious and linguistic—who came from East Pakistan had been exploited, victimised. They were illiterate, poor, innocent. Most of them could not procure citizenship certificates. They felt insecure. Now, there is no question of procuring certificates. By the accord, they have been regularised. This part is settled for ever. It's so nice.

Q: What about your personal position?

A: All right. I am fully protected.

Q: How?

A: I am still the chief minister.

Q: Previously you wanted 1971 as the cut-off year. You also said that disenfranchisement of some people for some years was absurd, unconstitutional. Now the accord accepts 1966 as the cut-off year and proposes disenfranchisement of the 1966-1971 entrants. And yet you welcomed the accord. How do you explain this shift in position?

A: Till today, it (the disenfranchisement) is unconstitutional. Constitution must be amended (to implement it). In the Constitution there is no provision for disenfranchisement.

Q: But the union home minister in his Guwahati press conference

categorically said that there was no bar under the Indian Constitution for the implementation of the accord.

A: He may say so. But I have not seen such a clause in the Constitution. We must do something in Parliament. May be, pass an executive order or something like that at least.

Q: We were talking about your shifting position.

A: Yes. See, people (who came between 1966 and 1971) are being disenfranchised for a brief period. Then it (the voting right) will be



Hiteswar Saikia: 'minorities are safe'

restored. Your other point about the cut-off year. We are not shifting our position. 1971 is still the cut-off year for detection and deportation (of foreigners). 1966 is not the cut-off year for deportation. It (1966) is a base year for disenfranchisement. And only for ten years. So, for all practical purposes, 1971 is the cut-off year. (The question of) 1966 will disappear after 1995. So, in the long run, 1971 will stay as the cut-off year.

Q: How do you identify 1995? The

accord says, disenfranchisement period will start from the date of detection. So, even in 1996 one may be detected as a foreigner and then disenfranchised. The sword is always there.

A: No, no. We have to complete the whole process (of detection) within one year. We must do that. No detection after that. It cannot be a long-drawn process. There is another point. Disenfranchisement process will exclude those whose names were there in the 1967 electoral rolls. So for all practical purposes, disenfranchisement will affect only those whose names are not there in the 1967 rolls.

Q: You maintain that disenfranchisement is unconstitutional. So it may be challenged in the Supreme Court?

A: (Laughs) I am not a lawyer... But I say, it is not possible to execute this unless something is done in Parliament.

Q: Didn't you insist till recently that Assam elections can be held on the basis of the 1979 rolls?

A: We have always wanted intensive revision of voters list up to 1.1.1985. But yes, we wanted 1979 as the base year for electoral rolls.

Q: Now that it would be held on the basis of the revised 1971 rolls, is not the election which was held in 1983 on the basis of 1979 rolls rendered invalid?

A: Why will it be so? Then the situation was different. After that we all agreed to 1971 (as the base year for electoral rolls).

Q: There is no specific provision in the accord anywhere saying that the forthcoming elections will be held according to the 1971 rolls. Then how is it presumed that this time elections can be held on the basis of the 1971 rolls?

A: We do not say elections will take place according to 1971 rolls. Intensive revision is being carried out to include (in the voters list) the names of all those citizens who came to the state up to 1.1.1985. However, scrutiny will be based on the 1971 rolls.

Q: The agreement implies that the present revised rolls would

have to be tallied with the 1967 rolls. Post 1966 foreigners will have to be detected and disenfranchised.

A That is not necessary now, that will take place after the elections.

Q Which means that those who came between 1966 to 1971 will be able to vote in these elections?

A Certainly.

Q But will the AASU agree to this proposition?

A Otherwise, why did they agree to elections being held so soon?

Q West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu has reacted sharply against the accord. What do you think of it?

A I think, he has not understood it clearly. He would not have objected if he really understood the accord.

Q But do you not agree that a large number of people will be rendered stateless by this accord? They will cease to have any basic rights for a certain period.

A Some people will lose their voting rights. But that's all. They will lose nothing else. Actually, 28,900 people belonging to religious minority groups would be affected and that too, partially.

1971 is the cut-off date for the detection and deportation of foreigners for all practical purposes. 1966 is a temporary phase, it will pass away.

Q There is an impression that all these people having no voting rights will be dispossessed of their land and property as well.

A No, no. They will not be dispossessed in any way. That is not the case. They are as good as we are in all cases, except that they will not have voting rights.

Q The minorities are very unhappy with the accord and already a movement is building up. On the

other side, the movement supporters are also becoming threatening. Don't you think, all these may escalate violence?

A We shall try to protect the minorities. All steps will be taken to prevent violence. But yes, we had some violent incidents. On 16 August one Youth Congress vice president and his brother were killed. Then there had been some cases of assault on Congressmen.

Q By the supporters of the movement?

A By the supporters of the movement.

Q What are your election prospects? Minorities once constituted your vote bank. But that support base is now depleting. I believe.

A If we can explain the accord in proper way they will support us.

Q Do you propose to make the next election a referendum for extending the cut off year from 1966 to 1971?

A It is 1971 already. That is, for all practical purposes, 1966 is a temporary phase, it will pass away. We welcome the accord in all its aspects.

Interviewed by Alapan Bandyopadhyay, Guwahati

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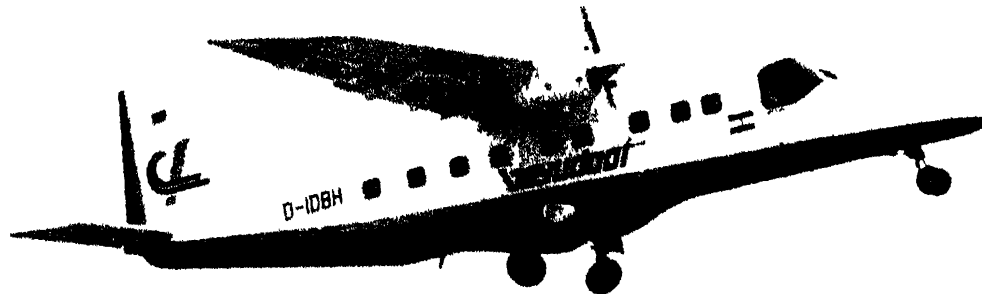
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SPECIAL REPORT



A Vayudoot Dornier ideal for India

Our Very Own Dorniers

The first of a new class of light aircraft, assembled in India, will take to the skies soon

A new class of light transport aircraft would be tested in India in October this year when the first Dornier 228 built by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) would roll out of the hangars in Kanpur. The Dornier 228, built to meet the specific requirements of the 1980s is the second light commuter carrier to be manufactured by HAL with foreign collaboration, the first being the HS 747 with Great Britain. The Dornier deal was finalised in 1981 to meet the pressing need of such a small aircraft for the Indian Navy, the Air Force, the coast guards and the newly introduced feeder service airline, Vayudoot. It took seven years and the recommendations of five high level committees to decide on indigenous production of the Dornier at the under utilised HAL plant at Kanpur, the low operational cost of the 19 seater commuter, giving it an edge above the other aircraft in the race. Already 10 Dorniers are flying with the Vayudoot the Oil and Natural

Gas Commission (ONGC) the director general of civil aviation (DGCA) and the coast guards which have laid to rest doubts about the Indo German collaboration and the wisdom to grant the licence for manufacture of such a small aircraft by HAL. However, the real breakthrough would come when the first phase of the production schedule would be complete and Vayudoot receives its first Indian assembled Dornier.

Doubts about the manufacture of the Dornier are circulating in spite of the sound performance of the aircraft in Indian conditions. In 1981 when the collaboration was finalised there were three light transport aircraft which had been shortlisted by the ministry of civil aviation and department of defence production. They were the Canadian Twin Otter, the Spanish Casa and the Dornier, all of which were 19 seaters. The Saab Fairchild - a 340 twin engine turboprop—a product of Swedish American collaboration was a late entrant for the licence to manufacture in India.

The Saab Fairchild, a 34 seater which was 10 per cent more fuel efficient than the others, according to some aviation experts was the most suitable for the expanding needs of India's light commuter air traffic requirements. The Dornier, according to committee reports on the choice of aircraft for the Vayudoot and licence manufacture, had a low operational cost and an excellent short take off and landing (STOL) capability.

In May this year months before the first phase of the Dornier HAL combine was to end, the ownership of the parent company changed hands. On 15 May negotiations concluded between the Dornier group and the Daimler Benz, makers of the Mercedes Benz, for the transfer of 60 per cent of holdings of the company and immediately questions on implications of the Daimler Benz and Dornier deal on the manufacture of the 19 seater in India were raised. On 21 August, Suresh Kalmadi, Congress(S) Member of Parliament

raised the matter of any major changes in the contract signed between the West German company and HAL in the Rajya Sabha. As the member was assured, no major alteration in schedule was ever likely to take place and the representatives of the Dornier company in India affirmed that in spite of the Daimler-Benz having a majority holding in the company, the HAL collaboration was not to be altered. It was also said that as five complete assembly kits had already arrived at Kanpur, the delivery of the planes was to be on schedule.

According to Harsh Vardhan, general manager of Vayudoot, which is the main beneficiary of the contract and is to receive the first batch of Dorniers from HAL, the commuters were being used for a maximum utility by the feeder airline in various sectors. Vayudoot which was established in 1981 and has become one of the world's fastest-growing feeder airline, was flying its passengers in planes borrowed from the Indian Airlines, till the first two Dornier-228s were ferried from Munich. Vayudoot's first official scheduled flight was inaugurated on 2 January 1985 from Delhi to Rae Bareilly and on to Lucknow and Dehra Dun. Today, the Vayudoot with its fleet of nine aircraft, including three Dorniers flies to 37 stations and is likely to reach its target of 50 stations by the end of this year. Said Harsh Vardhan: "The Vayudoot, which will be the largest user of the Dornier, was established as a regional air carrier, to build up with a minimum infrastructure and utilise some of the smaller runways constructed during the Second World War. The Dornier was selected after years of deliberations since it was a small-seater suiting the specific requirements of such a feeder service and used the most sophisticated technology available anywhere in the world at that time." Some experts felt that the Saab-Fairchild, a 34-seater, was unsuitable for the Vayudoot and was never seriously considered for the feeder airline.

While the world's "biggest little airline," Vayudoot, would be the first to fly the HAL-assembled Dorniers to meet its expansion programme, by 1986 more Dorniers are to be delivered to the Indian Air Force, the coast guard and Indian Navy. The contract between HAL and Dornier envisages the open manufacture of an excess of 100 light transports in India for a variety of uses. Pushpin Singh, the Dornier representative in New Delhi, explained that



Harsh Vardhan, Vayudoot's general manager: all praise for the Dornier

against complaints of the Dornier not being a proven aircraft in this part of the world and allegations that the Dornier was using India as a testing ground to manufacture a commuter aircraft which was still on the drawing-board stage in Germany, the Dornier was flying in all parts of the world. Over 30 countries are flying it: from the South Pole in Antarctica to Oman. He added: "There has been no major deviation from the contract which we signed with HAL. There have been marginal delays, some of which could be attributed to the non-suitability of HAL factories in India. The Dornier is the only airline commuter in the world which could have suited the trying conditions of airline commutation. When the Prime Minister inaugurates the flight of the first HAL-assembled Dornier later this year, it would mark a high point of the collaboration."

A more sophisticated usage of the Dornier-228 would be undertaken by the director-general of civil aviation (DGCA) when it receives two fully-equipped Dorniers for the purpose of calibration of ground facilities. Senior officials in the department explained that the high technology equipment required for the calibrated aircraft, called the flight inspection system (FIS) was to be fitted into the Dornier-228, orders for which are soon to be placed. According to other aviation experts, one of the major impediments being faced by the department, which is also responsible for maintaining the safe-

ty standards for the HAL-Dornier deal is the finalisation of the nature of equipment for the Dorniers. It is believed that the DGCA has issued a letter of intent to purchase the FIS systems from the Norsk Marconi Company of Norway, for which quotations have not been asked from other avionics firms including the Sierra Research Company of USA, which produces the most sophisticated FIS systems. Also, since the deal has been signed with the help of Dornier in favour of the Norsk Marconi, the government would have to go per force for the purchase of ground laboratory equipment for the FIS costing over a million dollars.

Officials of the DGCA pointed out that the delayed selection of the FIS equipment for the purpose of calibration of ground facilities is not likely to delay the process of licence production of the Dornier-228 by HAL. HAL representatives in Delhi explained that non-availability of minor components in India, which has been criticised in Parliament and which has been noted in official communications between the West German parent company and HAL, would only delay the delivery schedule to a negligible extent. By the time the second and the third phase of the open manufacture is complete, it would mark the successful cooperative programme with India and put an end to all deliberations and indecision on the suitability of the Dornier for Indian conditions.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

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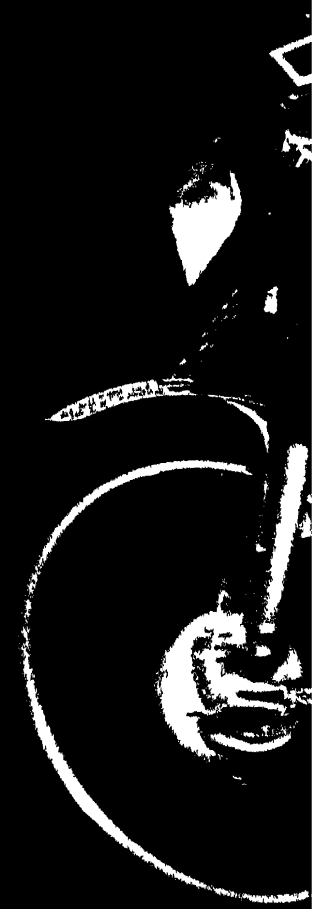
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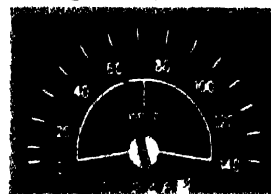
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Is the Sai Baba on His Way Out?

The Godman has quit his Whitefield Ashram

The man who is famous for conjuring things has disappeared. It has been more than a year since Shri Sathya Sai Baba who has a very large following in India turned up at his ashram at Whitefield near Bangalore where he normally stays. The apparent signs of the Whitefield establishment being closed down, coupled with the Baba's increasingly infrequent *darshans*, has fuelled speculation that the Godman had finally decided to leave Bangalore.

It is not quite clear why Sai Baba has deserted his Whitefield establishment although enquiries suggest that he was disturbed by numerous agitations launched by the locals against his ashram, Brindavana. Relations between the ashramites and the people of Kadugodi, the village near which Brindavana is located were turning sour, reminiscent of those between the inhabitants of Pune and the Rajneesh ashram.

But while the denizens of Kadugo-

di did not exactly have cordial relations with Sai Baba, the Godman's decision to quit the ashram appears to have affected Kadugodi adversely. The tourist traffic has dwindled rapidly and the economy of the village is in a shambles. A sizeable section of people who made a living out of "marketing the Baba"—selling everything from his pictures and posters to rings, chains and other odds and ends—have been deprived of their income. Kadugodi now looks like any other village and, with the exit of Sai Baba, has lost its importance.

But an even bigger loss for Kadugodi, Whitefield and the surrounding areas is the imminent closure of the Sathya Sai College run by the Sai Baba Trust. The sprawling buildings housing the college already look deserted and the admissions to the college have declined rapidly. There are only 97 students now for the three year degree course, comprising three faculties: arts, science and commerce. Though the staff at the college argue that the fewer number of students is indicative of the stiff entrance test and the "high standard of learning," there is no doubt that the college is on the verge of winding up.

In fact, it was over the issue of education that the people of Kadugodi first agitated against the Sai Baba's establishment. Last year, rumours that the Sai Baba Trust was planning to close down the Junior College comprising the two year pre-university course, sparked off a violent agitation. While the trust maintained that the pre-university course was not "serving any purpose," the local Kadugodi Nagarika Hakku Badhathe Samiti (Kadugodi Citizens Rights Protection Committee) alleged that the trustees wanted to close down the junior college in order to start medical and engineering colleges and in turn collect donations in the form of capitation fees. The trust in turn denied the charge but said the purpose was to start a



Sai Baba: sour relations with neighbours

polytechnic-like institute and have job-oriented courses since the pre-university course did not appear useful. The citizens' committee also alleges that the Sai Baba institutions catered only to rich students coming from metropolises ("children of spiritually-inclined rich folks") and that the students coming from Kadugodi and neighbouring villages were given a raw deal.

Says K.N. Ashwathnarayana Reddy, convenor of the citizens' committee: "One of the reasons why the Baba has deserted the place is because of the increasing awareness exhibited by the people here. The motive behind closing the college is that they have realised it is not a smart thing to educate villagers. Our students have learnt quickly and begun to expose and ridicule the Baba." However, the influence the Sai Baba establishment commands in government circles has enabled it to overcome local protests. It has finally decided to close down the junior college. The second year pre-university now has only 17 students and no admissions have been made for the first year. Meanwhile, to counter more agitations, the state government has opened another junior college in Kadugodi.

The Sai Baba ashram was also becoming increasingly unpopular on account of a controversy over water. The citizens' committee launched a protracted struggle to secure a share of drinking water from within the premises of the ashram, alleging that the trust had usurped two water tanks meant for the village under the National Rural Water Supply Scheme. But the plea fell on deaf ears and long queues before municipal water taps are still a common sight in Kadugodi. Remarked one citizen: "Oh, the ashram needs the water from the tanks to grow their lawns."

The confrontation between the inmates of the ashram and the villagers appears to have worsened several times with the common folk repeatedly questioning the Baba's mystical powers. There were several demonstrations last year when Sai Baba was ridiculed. Around the same time, there was a spate of murders and unnatural deaths in and around Kadugodi and Whitefield, which threw doubts on the operations of the Sai Baba's establishment. This apparently hurt the Baba a great deal and he decided to quit the place.

The inmates of Brindavana, however, insist that Sai Baba has not deserted the place, though they agree it is quite unlike him to stay away for a year. Says R.G. Kulkarni, principal of the junior college and a devout disci-

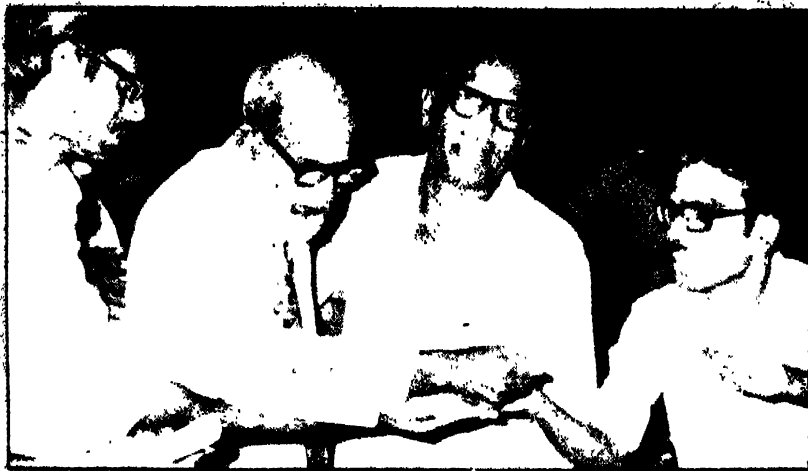


B.D. Jatti, once the acting President of India, pays his respects to Sai Baba

ple of the Baba: "Of course he will come back. He is only busy with preparations for his 60th birthday in November." However, other inmates disclosed that when they approached the Baba and requested him to come to Whitefield they were rebuked and asked to "work hard to bring the people back into the fold" before they dared to call him back.

The decline in Sai Baba's popularity began with the crusade launched by the famous rationalist Dr Abraham Kovoor (see box). Dr Kovoor, an India-born Sri Lankan, took upon himself to denounce the Baba as a fraudulent Godman whose miracles were nothing but plain magic. Kovoor found instant support from Dr H. N. Narasimhaiah, then vice-

A Rationalist's Dream



Dr Kovoor distributing sacred ash he produced miraculously

Come 18 September and it will be seven years since Dr Abraham Kovoor, the eminent rationalist, died. One could say it is Dr Kovoor's seventh death anniversary but he may not have liked it. For Dr Kovoor was a unique human being who attached no importance to numbers or dates. He was an iconoclast who smashed everything that was unscientific and irrational and who spent a lifetime fighting ignorance and blind faith that enveloped his fellow human beings.

When his wife died in 1974, Dr Kovoor inserted an obituary notice in a newspaper which read: "Mrs Acca Kovoor expired leaving behind neither a mind nor a 'spirit' to bother credulous people. According to her wish, her body will be removed to the faculty of medicine, University of Sri Lanka, Colombo. No funeral, no cremation, no flowers." There was nothing flippant about the notice for he loved her dearly. She had been his constant companion in his battle against religious and spiritual frauds for many decades.

Dr Kovoor himself was a sprightly 80 when he died. Till his last days he fought vigorously against ignorance and superstition. He also authored two books: *Begone Godmen and Gods, Demons and Spirits* in which he shattered many myths. Of his work he said: "He who does not allow his miracles to be investigated is a crook: he who does not have the courage to investigate is a fool and he who is prepared to

believe without verification is a fool. If there were a single person with supernatural powers in any part of the world I would have become a pauper long ago since I have offered an award of one lakh Sri Lanka rupees to anyone who can demonstrate any one of the 23 items of miracles mentioned in my permanent challenge, under fraud proof conditions."

Among Dr Kovoor's 23 items were: "materialise from nothing any object I ask," "walk on water," and "get out of a locked room by divine power." The challenge was governed by a few conditions including one which needed the challenger to deposit Rs 1,000 before he took up the task. The challenge was on for nearly two decades till Dr Kovoor died but few took it up. Each time Dr Kovoor read or heard about the miraculous powers of someone, he wrote a letter or rushed to the spot and renewed his challenge. The Godmen invariably backed out. Once, Dr G. Venkata Rao, a medical practitioner from Bangalore, deposited Rs 1,000 believing that a Godman he knew had miraculous powers and that he could get him to perform miracles and win the Rs one lakh. At the last moment he backed out and Dr Kovoor went home richer by Rs 1,000.

Dr Kovoor is dead and gone but the practices he fought against have not. It is quite unnecessary to say "may his soul rest in peace" for he would have said he did not have one. But the memory of his siege against fraud lives on.

chancellor of Bangalore University and a proclaimed rationalist himself.

The proposed investigation by Dr Kovoor and Dr Narasimhaiah into the Sai Baba phenomenon shook the Godman's establishment. The rationalist expedition also received wide publicity in the press and for the first time people began to talk about the Sai Baba without the awe and devotion associated earlier. Says Dr Narasimhaiah recalling those days: "I think we succeeded in opening the eyes of the people. Earlier, people were scared to talk questioningly about his so-called miraculous powers. But after we publicly announced our doubts, people opened up. In bus stops and coffee shops, everyone was talking aloud about why the Godman did not accept our challenge and prove his powers before an investigating panel."

But the Sai Baba establishment managed to overcome the "adverse" publicity generated by the rationalists and things began to function normally again. But only till the agitation in the junior college began. After that, little has been heard about the Baba and he has not stirred out of his Puttaparthi abode for many months.

In the meanwhile, some of the Baba's close associates have fallen out with the Godman. One of the foremost disciples to fall out with the Godman is Dr S. Bhagavantham, former scientific adviser to the government of India. Dr Bhagavantham belonged to the Baba's inner circle and the fact that a scientist like him believed in the Godman's incredible powers strengthened the Sai Baba's credentials. It is not known why Dr Bhagavantham deserted Sai Baba, although one version is that he was sore about the appointment of a candidate other than his choice as vice-chancellor to the Sathya Sai University. That appears too flimsy a reason but Dr Bhagavantham himself was not available for comment, being away in Singapore. However, another close Baba disciple who has abandoned the establishment said he was "disgusted with the whole set-up and he wanted to return to the sane world." The disgruntled follower who is also from the academic field left no doubt that there was more to the issue but he did not want to talk about it. Many more devotees including most foreigners have already deserted the flock, according to this follower.

The contradictory feelings aroused by Sai Baba is most evident among the academia. While Dr H. Narasimhaiah, an eminent educationist has campaigned virulently and fairly



The Sathya Sai Baba college in Bangalore: preserve of the elite

successfully against the Godman. Prof. V. K. Gokak, another prominent educationist and one of the Baba's closest disciples, has also tried to demolish the myth of the Sai Baba. Both Dr Narasimhaiah, and Prof. Gokak are former vice-chancellors of Bangalore University and both are respected for their contribution to the field of education in Karnataka.

It is difficult to speculate why this has happened, although Dr Narasimhaiah believes that even sane and rational men like Prof. Gokak and Dr Bhagavantham had suspended their disbelief in the face of personal tragedies. The Baba's claim to magical powers are also buttressed by half-baked writings and observations as for instance by the Australian writer-disciple, Howard Murphet, who has authored three books on Sai Baba. Even well-known writers like Colin Wilson mention Sai Baba in their writings, and this comes in handy for the believers. Says Wilson, one of the most famous writers on paranormal and occult in his book *Mysteries*: "Sai Baba, a contemporary Hindu saint, performs miracles a dozen times a day." Lyall Wason describes

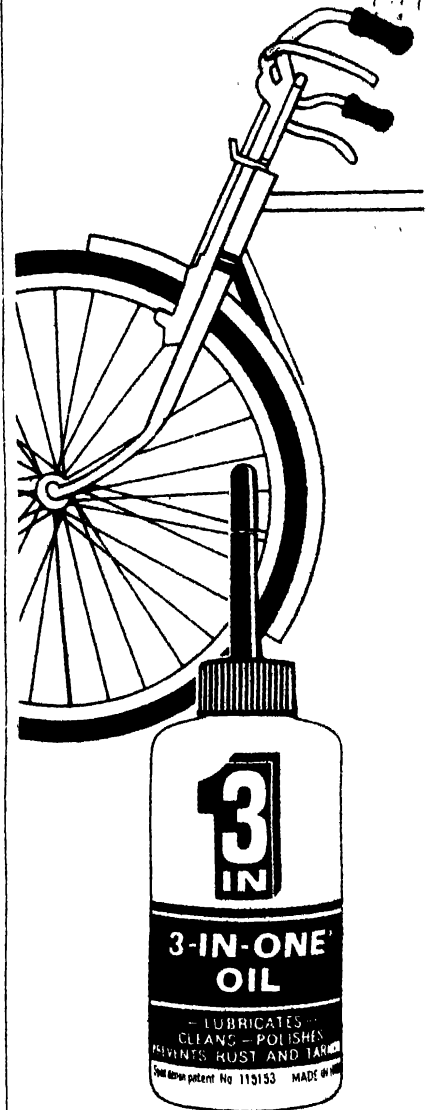
him, turning rocks into sweets, flowers into jewels and producing showers of sacred ash from the air in quantities sufficient to fill large drums. His powers were studied by Howard Murphet, whose book, *Sai Baba: Man of Miracles* documents so many paranormal occurrences that it finally becomes almost as confusing as Puharich's book on Geller. However, the Baba's antagonists also have sticks to beat the Godman's establishment with. Tal Brooke, another Australian disciple who fell out with the Baba, later authored a book titled *Lord of the Air* that, according to the Baba's disciples, went a long way in damaging the Godman's reputation.

All that seems to be coming to an end and Sai Baba appears intent on bowing out gracefully from public view. Even the preparations for his 60th birthday are on a relatively low key although Baba's devotees claim that it will be a unique event. But that might well be the last major event in the chequered career of India's most widely-known Godman.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

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INDUSTRY

Slashed Excise Cheers Textile Sector

But clothing the masses is still a faraway dream

Textile mills have never had it so good a favourable textile policy on 6 June and a Rs 131 crore duty relief from 28 August—with promises of more to come. The excise concessions announced last week are reduction in excise duty on polyester fibre from Rs 45 to Rs 25 per kg, on polyester cotton blended yarn from Rs five to Rs two per kg, on polyester viscose blended yarn from Rs ten to four per kg and on acrylic fibre from Rs 17.50 to Rs ten per kg.

The government has made clear its intention to make cotton polyester blends the future garment of the masses. Cotton polyester blends suit the Indian climate while its durability is an important attribute. Also, the government's move has been determined by emerging surpluses in long and extra long staple cottons, which can be blended with polyester fibre to make yarn and cloth. The average count of cotton yarn spun was just 30/90 in 1983 and the new reliefs should enthuse mills to go finer. Simultaneously, it reduces pressure on short and medium sta-

ples, which have been perennially short. Thus, composite textile mills in 1983 produced only 277 million metres of polyester-cotton cloth out of a total production of 3,528 million metres. In two years, output could well more than double to touch 600 million metres.

As a back up measure, government has okayed capacities for making polyester fibre and its raw materials like DMT and TPA. The total licensed capacity for polyester fibre works out to 246,431 tonnes per annum while for DMT, it is 145,000 tonnes per annum. Additionally, government has okayed 75,000 tonnes per annum for a TPA unit to be set up by Reliance with an equivalent capacity proposed in the public sector.

However, uncertainty hangs over mill owners breaking bread with the masses. Kantikumar R. Podar, chairman, Indian Cotton Mills' Federation has appealed to member mills "to ensure that the benefits of the fiscal reliefs are passed on to the consumers." It means nothing. Instead,

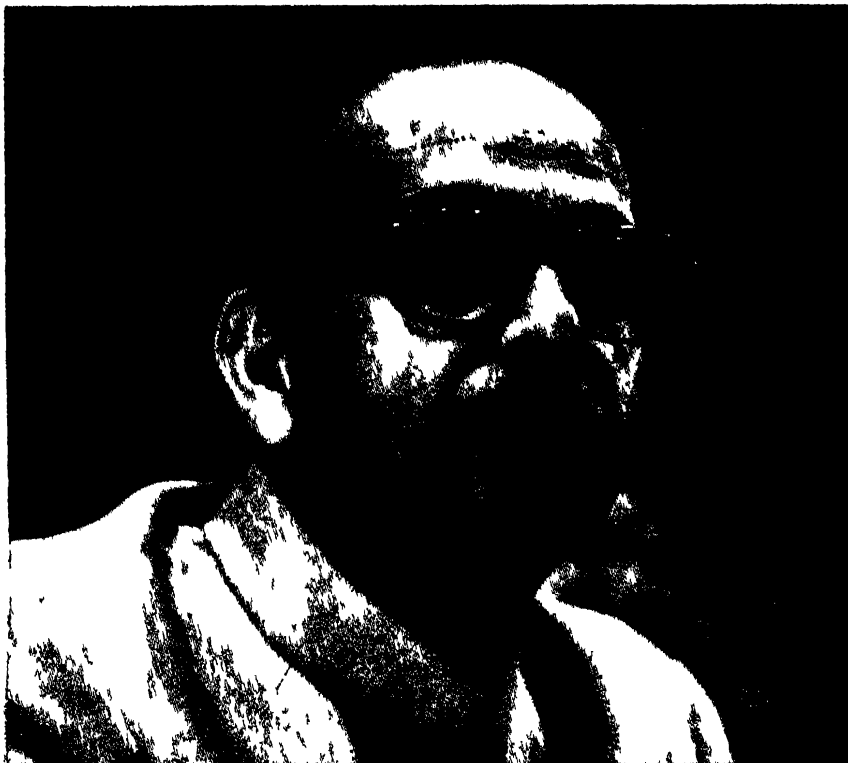
Podar could have issued a diktat to immediately cut prices as the Association of Polyester Staple Fibre Manufacturers has promised to pass on the entire duty relief to mills. Polyester fibre quotations are to be cut by Rs 22 per kg from around Rs 97 per kg.

Private textile mills have not played fair in absorbing duty reliefs to the tune of Rs 300 crores given in the last two budgets. With powerlooms enjoying an overall cost advantage of around 15 per cent, private mills will now be under pressure to cut prices. The government need not have opted for supplies of duty free fibre to NTC mills under the "approved programme for production and supply of low priced blends," as there is no machinery either to monitor prices at retail levels or stop leakages of duty free fibre into the open market at fancy premiums. The latter possibility indeed looms large with private mills being given the option to join hands with NTC. It could perhaps have been operationally easier if the anti dumping duty of Rs nine per kg on imported polyester fibre had been done away with. At the same time, at least 40 good mills under the NTC umbrella could have been selected to produce not just 80 million metres but around 200 million metres of polyester cotton blends.

On a rough calculation, the retail level price of shirting (60 per cent cotton/40 per cent polyester) costing Rs 40/45 per metre should drop to around Rs 32 per metre while suitings should drop to Rs 40/45 from Rs 60 per metre. Smuggling will no doubt continue though. On the pavements of Bombay or Calcutta a ready made blended shirt of foreign origin is available at just Rs 30. Such sales would not stop even if all the duties are foregone because western plants enjoy superior economies of scale.

Finally, a point to ponder is that sharp price reductions will only help the lower middle class and not the poorest of the poor who cannot afford to buy even controlled cloth at Rs 2 per metre. The lesson here is that supply side economics just cannot work to widen the demand base until the threshold demand level of the masses is raised. And till then, finery for the poor will remain a distant dream.

P. Devarajan, Bombay



Finance and commerce minister V.P. Singh: cotton-polyester to clothe the common man

RAJIV BASU

TOURISM

Sharing for Ever

An offer you can't refuse

For those who stay at home during the holiday season because taking to the hills or to the sea is too expensive, here comes an offer which might just about move them. The Dalmia group has floated a new concept in India called "time sharing" which promises holidays to the middle class at an "affordable price."

What is time sharing all about? The idea is simple and innovative. A company named Dalmia Resorts International will build cottages or flats in various places which will be sold on a time sharing basis. This

means that anyone willing to pay between Rs 13,500 and Rs 26,000 would be able to buy the right to a flat or cottage of his choice for a week every year—for ever. Thus for every cottage or flat there would be 52 owners, each having a right to use the premises for one week, which includes the right to allow his friends to use it or rent it out—or, if he wants his money back, to sell it. The scheme, promoted by Sanjay Dalmia and implemented by Prem N. Kapur, a consultant, will take 18 to 24 months to be completed. To start

with, resorts will be set up at three places: Delhi, Goa and Kodaikanal. Interestingly, these resorts will be developed by different Dalmia companies, viz. Dalmia Dairy Industries Ltd (for the resort in Delhi), Golden Tobacco Co Ltd (for Goa) and Shree Meenakshi Mills Ltd (for Kodaikanal).

According to Dalmia, land at these three places has already been bought and "some preliminary work" has started. Dalmia, who is investing about Rs four crores in the projects says that not only is time sharing a good business prospect but is also a potential catalyst for boosting the fortunes of the tourism industry. Asked whether such a novel concept would go down with the Indian tourist, Dalmia quips: "If I was not sure of making a profit, I would not have invested in it."

But the person most enthusiastic

An Era Ends in Reliance

On the morning of 30 August, newspaper editors in Bombay were suddenly informed by their respective advertisement departments that Reliance Industries Ltd had booked space for two full page advertisements in the publications of 31 August. Dhirubhai Ambani's company, which for the past 18 years has only given out good news, for a change, had put a black border around the unprecedented doublespread insertions. Rasiklal Meswani, the company's 47-year-old executive director in charge of yarn sales, was dead. Never before has the death of a business executive merited such high profile media treatment. But the editors in Bombay were at a loss. Very little was known about the man whom Reliance was mourning.

When R.L. Meswani breathed his last at around three o'clock in the morning of 30 August, Dhirubhai Ambani and his two sons, Mukesh and Anil, were by the bedside of the man who was the closest aide of the Reliance chairman. Dhirubhai Ambani was not only Meswani's boss, but also his maternal uncle. Meswani lost his father in his childhood and along with his mother, Trilochanben, moved into the Ambani household at Chorwad in Saurashtra. Five years younger than Dhirubhai Ambani, Meswani was his uncle's trusted aide from the day Reliance was launched in 1967 when the original firm of Reliance Commercial Corporation

(founded: 1960) became Reliance Textile Industries (now once again changed to Reliance Industries Ltd). Meswani was put in charge of yarn trading. The complicated retail yarn selling system which has been the backbone of Reliance's phenomenal growth is credited by many to Meswani. Dhirubhai Ambani and Meswani devised a system under which Reliance yarn was sold directly to 25,000 small scale units, who converted the yarn and sold the grey fabric back to Reliance, to be processed and sold under the "Vimal" brandname. Indeed 30 to 40 per cent of "Vimal" fabrics are made this way. Under Meswani's scheme, Reliance had 25,000 ensured yarn customers who in turn had a guaranteed buyer for

their cloth.

The importance of Meswani in Reliance's set-up could be gauged from the fact that on the fourth floor of Maker Chamber IV at Bombay's Nariman Point, till 30 August 1985, there were only two cabins with nameplates: one bore the name of D.H. Ambani and the other R.L. Meswani. All other top Reliance executives who have their offices on the chairman's floor only have cabin numbers, the nameplate being a rare honour in the company.

Rasiklal Meswani's death sent shock waves through the family on 30 August. For, on that day, a *puja* had been organised at their native Chorwad. In fact, the Ambani family—Dhirubhai and his wife Koki-laben, his elder son Mukesh and his wife and his younger son Anil—were to leave Bombay for the family function. Due to the sudden bereavement, the function had to be cancelled and instead of celebrating at Chorwad, the Ambani family assembled at Rasiklal Meswani's apartment to mourn his death.

With the death, Dhirubhai Ambani not only lost his trusted aide but Mukesh and Anil lost their elder cousin, who had taken charge of their training in their initial days in the company. An era ended in India's corporate history with the death of the co-founder of Reliance's yarn marketing policy.



Rasiklal Meswani

A Special Correspondent, Bombay

about the project is the one who has conceived it. Prem N Kapur—who has had “vast experience” in the hotel industry—says that time sharing will “revolutionise” the concept of holidaying. Explains Kapur “The resort coming up in Delhi, for instance, is located a few kilometres off the airport further down the road from Centaur Hotel, and will have 75 units in three categories—two bedrooms plus a sitting room, one bedroom and a sitting room, and the third type with bedroom and sitting room combined. Kitchenettes and toilets are attached. All rooms are fully furnished and the kitchenette stocked with utensils and crockery. In other words, each flat is an independent holiday home. For a prospective buyer, the smallest unit with an area of 400 sq ft would cost Rs 20,000, the second one of 530 sq ft would cost Rs 22,000 and the two bedroom set of 670 sq ft would come for Rs 26,000.” This apart, one would have to pay Rs 3,000 as a one-time sum which would be put into a bank account and the cost of maintenance would be borne from the interest earned on this sum.

Dalmia Resorts International (DRI) will have offices in major cities where a computerised service will keep track of the various wishes of the members. So someone, owning a week in Delhi, wants to go to Goa, say, or vice versa, the company will arrange for the exchange for a nominal fee of Rs 99.

To ensure that the DRI resorts are indeed upto world standards, Kapur says that the well known architects' firm of Stein, Doshi and Bhalla has been appointed to conceptualise the project. Also, the resorts will have facilities like swimming pools, tennis, billiards and a library. The concept seems exotic enough, but according to additional director-general of tourism, Ramesh Chander, there is “no reason why it cannot succeed.”

And success is what the Dalmias are counting on. Sanjay Dalmia, for one, has no doubts given that he is planning 50 resorts in various parts of the country in the next four years. In the near future, he is planning to set up holiday resorts in Srinagar, Mussoori and Konarak.

Hardev Singh, New Delhi

the administration of the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Scheme. In order to meet its administrative and other expenses, the board charges a levy, calculated as a percentage of the wages payable by employers. As the existing rate of levy for pool workers is 305 per cent of their wages, employers are tempted to evade it as far as possible by employing fewer “gangs” and, instead, getting the job done by paying speed money. The income-tax authorities are said to be probing into this racket. Meanwhile, the port authorities are considering various measures—Operation Jyoti is one—to root out such corrupt practices.

While sections of workers might have been busy improving their personal financial positions by accepting speed money, the port's finances continue to be unsatisfactory. The working deficit of the port was Rs 5.55 crores in 1983-84. The annual report of the ministry of shipping and transport for 1984-85 reveals that the operational income of the port during 1983-84 was reduced by about 10 per cent due to “the lack of growth of traffic.” The report discloses that the operating ratio (that is the percentage of operating expenditure to operating income) of Calcutta port was 88.84 per cent in 1983-84 compared to 65.70 per cent in Bombay and 72.30 per cent in Madras.

Against this backdrop, the need to improve efficiency and eliminate malpractices is self-evident. But the malady afflicting the port is too deep-rooted.

The president of the Association of Shipping Interests in Calcutta, M. L. Jha, recently told the port chairman, T. C. Dutt, that the already low productivity has declined even further by 30-40 per cent and that the turn round of vessels had also been affected.

According to the Consultative Committee of Stevedores' Associations in Calcutta, loading and unloading operations in the past have gone down by a neat 50 per cent. Indeed, shipping circles say that some lines have even threatened to boycott Calcutta port if ships have to wait too long, as the situation is now.

And even as this semantic shadow-boxing continues, actual users of the port—namely, importers and exporters—privately contend that Operation Jyoti has done little to check corruption. Port users now put the money “in drawers which are kept half-open,” according to one version. Or else, money is paid at a venue away from the port site.

A Special Correspondent, Calcutta

INFRASTRUCTURE

No Speed Without Money

Anti-corruption drive at Calcutta port flops

The much heralded “Operation Jyoti” launched by the Calcutta Port Trust authorities on 22 July, has brought out glaringly the existence of widespread corruption in this major port which plays a vital role in the country's foreign trade. Although it is common knowledge that users of the port often have to “tip” workers in order to get things done promptly, it was not expected that corruption had gone to such an extent as to generate the staggering estimated sum of Rs 20 crores per annum in black money.

The port at present has about 29,000 workers of different categories. The number of registered dock workers is nearly 7,700. They handle the entire cargo operations on board the ships and, therefore, are in a position to favour users by accelerating the handling tempo suitably, depending on the extra payment given to them. Of late, such payment—popularly known as “speed money”—has become the rule rather than the exception. It is said that dock labour board workers have

“earned” on occasions an extra amount of over Rs 3,000 per head per month as speed money.

The dock labour board consists of the representatives of the government, dock workers and employers of dock workers, and shipping companies. The board is responsible for



Calcutta port: glaring corruption

At a Glance

DIVIDENDS

Modi Industries: Dividends stepped up to 18 per cent (ten per cent) for year ended 31 March 1985.

Hindustan Brown Boveri: Stepped up equity dividend to 15 per cent (ten per cent) for year ended April 1985.

P.L. Finance and Investment Ltd: Declared an interim dividend of nine per cent for the year to December next.

Kemp and Company: Announced unchanged dividend of ten per cent for the year ended March 1985.

Usha Rectifier Corporation (India) Ltd: Recommended 15 per cent for year ended 30 June 1985.

India Jute and Industries Ltd: Skipped the equity dividend for the year ended 31 March 1985 in view of accumulated losses.

Aluminium Industries: Again skipped dividend for the year ended March 1985.

General Industrial Society: Passing over dividend once again for the year ended March 1985.

Bangalore Leasing Ltd: Recommends 12 per cent dividend for year ended 30 June 1985 (six per cent for 1983-84).

Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC): Dividend for the year ended 30 June 1985 raised by one point to 13 per cent.

India Steamship Company Ltd: Again skipped equity dividend for the year ended 31 March 1985 in view of inadequate profits.

ISSUES

Modi Xerox: Proposes a rights issue of 24.8 lakh new equity shares to existing shareholders on a pro-rata basis subject to consent of controller of capital issues.

Karnataka Welding Products (KWP): Promoted by Kirloskars in association with Caul Cloos, Schweisstech-nik of West Germany. Will issue three lakh equity shares of Rs ten each at par.

Asian Paints: Issue of bonus shares on a three-for-five basis by capitalising Rs 3.11 crores from general reserve and share premium account.

Larsvin Business Finance and Leasing Company, Hyderabad: Has dropped proposal to make a rights issue of capital.

Kalyansundram Cement Industries: Making rights issue at par on a one-for-three basis. Register of members and share transfer books will remain closed from 17 to 25 September, both days inclusive, for this purpose.

Lohia Machines Ltd: Will issue 9,09,090 rights convertible debentures of Rs ten each aggregating to Rs ten crores for cash at par. These debentures—being the third series—will be fully secured and will carry an annual interest rate of 13.5 per cent. Rs ten from the face value of each debenture will be converted into one equity share of Rs ten at par after six months from the date of allotment.

RESULTS

Rasoi: Reports "encouraging performance" in first half of 1985. Vanaspati production for first six months was 13,617 tonnes (9,723 for corresponding period last year).

IVP: IVP (formerly Indian Vegetable Products) fared "very well" during 1984.

PRODUCTS

Enfield India: Considering diversification into consumer durables, electronic components, auto ancillaries, manufacturing aids for engineering, plastic industry and leisure activity items.

Spartek Ceramics India: Successfully produced for the first time in India ceramic floor tiles at the Tirupati factory, using low-fuel American technology. Price-wise compared well with mosaic; strength-wise, four times the value of ordinary mosaic flooring tiles.

Karnataka Welding Products (KWP): Proposes to manufacture welding robots which will make possible automation of any welding process.

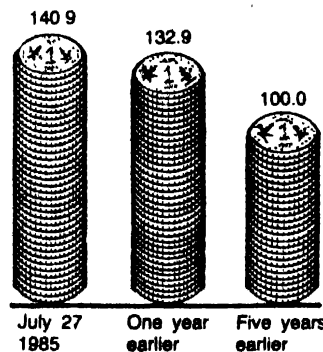
Standard Equity Fund (SEF): Bringing to India for the first time, hi-technology diagnostic kits—called CPK-MB kits—for the detection of heart attacks. These kits detect an enzyme released during heart attacks and thereby provide accurate tests for early detection and evaluation of coronary damage and for determination of infarction size.

SHARES / TOP TEN

	1985		Opening market quote on Sept 2
	High	Low	
	Rs.	Rs	Rs
ACC	595 00	385 00	512.00
Ballarpur	65 00	40 00	50 50
Bombay Dyeing	144 00	66 00	115 50
Britannia	91 00	46.50	62 00
Guj. State Fert	790 00	537 00	680.00
Gwalior Rayon	82 00	53 75	56 50
J.K. Synthetic	116 00	52 75	100.00
Larsen & Toubro	165.00	72.00	150 00
Lipton	57 50	27 00	46.50
Wimco	68.00	37.00	58 00

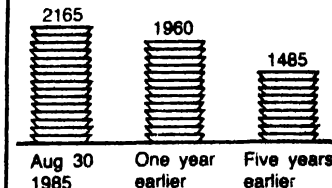
Note: The most actively traded shares last week

DEARNESS LEVEL

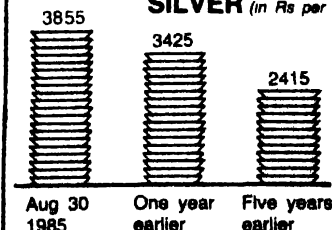


Note: Based on wholesale prices of selected essentials

GOLD (in Rs per 10 gms)



SILVER (in Rs per Kg)



Source: Bombay Bullion Association Ltd.

Chart by Nilratan Marfy

ENVIRONMENT

Bombay's Black Friday

One dies, and 150 others are affected by a chlorine gas leak

The environmental safety committee created by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) after the Bhopal Union Carbide tragedy, had in the first week of February released the following findings about the Calico Chemical plant at Chembur:

- Although there is a safety officer in the factory, the committee noticed that the safety codes are not followed strictly by the workers. The safety aspect including disaster planning, requires a thorough review. A contract worker died a few years ago while scraping a pipe holder, when the holder got detached from the roof, owing to corrosion.

- The valves, pipelines and storage vessels of the chlorine and caustic soda plant are in a highly corroded state and according to the committee, the plant is not safe enough to be operated in the present condition. The committee added that proper masks, emergency kits and breathing apparatus should be provided in the chlorine-handling area.

- The chlorine scrubbing system is inadequate in the HCL plant. The vent lines from the HCL storage tanks do not pass through the scrubber column, as safety regulations demand.

- There is no particulate emission control system in the calcium carbide plant and there is no monitoring of the chlorine that is released from both the caustic soda plant and HCL plants.

It was Chembur's black Friday on 30 August, when around 9.30 am and later at 11.30 am a serious leak of chlorine gas enveloped the Calico Chemicals factory, killing a 25-year old worker I.B. Mazumdar and affecting nearly 150 others. Among the victims was Dr Datta Samant, the trade unionist and MP who was addressing a meeting outside the factory to demand the full payment of wages.

One eyewitness who went to the plant at the time of the second and more serious leak on Friday said, "As I approached the plant, I saw an endless line of people running from the slums in the surrounding area of the plant with just their personal belongings. The chlorine gas which looked yellow at ground level became greenish. A slight drizzle worsened the situation, as rain water when mixed with chlorine, produces hydrochloric acid which caused eye and throat irritations. Visibility in the area was barely 50 feet and the police had to rush through the fog to help rescue people."



People escaping from the area soon after the gas leak. The Calico chemical plant is behind the fence

Efforts are now being made by the Calico management to blame the chlorine leakage on the union led by Dr Datta Samant. The factory had been closed since 23 May when the Tatas cut off their electric supply following a dispute over the electric bill. The Environment Safety Committee and the MPCB appear to be taking things easy. After pointing out the defects and recommending remedies, it did nothing to have the recommendations implemented. Said C.D. Oomachen, legislator and chairman of the MPCB, "The management claimed that the company was in a financial crisis and hence it could not undertake the corrective measures." If these are acceptable excuses, one does not see the justification for the existence of an ESC and the MPCB. The point raised is whether the lives of workers can be compromised due to lack of finances.

P. Abraham, member-secretary of the safety review committee of the department of atomic energy and a crusading member of SOCLEAN (Society for Clean Cities) said, "This leak is another example of the lack of enforcement of recommendations of the technical committee. The Garg Committee had observed that the valves of the pipeline were corroded and had recommended urgent remedial actions. The committee had also recommended that the plant was not in a safe condition to operate. According to experts, the government should stipulate a time limit for the implementation of the recommendations as the Chembur population can be very badly affected if such leakages are allowed to recur. Even now it is not too late to prescribe exclusion areas surrounding plants which handle toxic materials in large quantities. The village Gawanpada is very close to many factories handling hazardous materials. Therefore, alternative accommodation should be provided to the villagers. If a leak develops in the ammonia storage tanks belonging to the Rashtriya Chemicals Fertiliser plant, the damage will be severe and Gawanpada will be the immediate victim."

Plant officials claimed that on 24 June they asked for 13 workers to help to neutralise the gas, but the union demanded that the workers be paid their full salaries. Explaining the position, Dr Datta Samant said that the management knew that the electricity was going to be cut. They ordered a lay off and hence were paying lay off wages to the workers. The labour commissioner and the labour minister N.M. Tidke wrote a

letter to the management saying that workers' should be paid full wages but the company refused. The company also asked for 160 workers to maintain the plant and the adjoining officers colony, but the workers said they would do so only if they were paid full wages.

The chlorine was thus left in the tanks. Chlorine is highly corrosive, it is unlikely that the management informed the pollution control board about this even though three officers worked in rotation round the clock. On 30 August, plant works manager, R.V. Naik, located a leakage and at around 9.30 am wanted to transfer the

chlorine into a tonner. But the pipe began to leak. The work of neutralising the gas the following day was further hampered for quite some time because no electricity was available for clearance operations and corroded insulations. "Operation Faith" to neutralise an estimated 45 tonnes of chlorine in three tanks started with the help of technical experts from Standard Alkali and Dr P.K. Ghosh of the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, who was supervising the operations. According to one source, the leakage could have been avoided had the Calico management taken the help of the Rashtriya Che-

mical and Fertiliser (RCF) experts. Mr Duleep Singh, chairman and managing director of the RCF said that his men were kept in readiness but for some reasons, they were not asked.

The police have registered cases under Sections 304 A and 337 (causing death by negligence but not amounting to culpable homicide) against the company. However, as Dr Samant said, it is easier for the authorities to arrest workers under any law than the management. This time too the management will go scot free, he said.

Oga Tellis, Bombay

PUNJAB

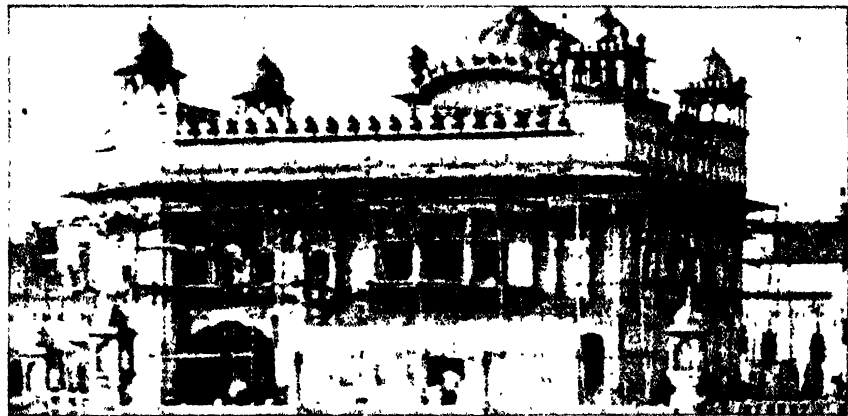
Battle in the Courtroom

SGPC sues the government for damages to property

Soon after the Punjab accord was signed and in the midst of all the controversy and speculation about the announcement of the elections in the state, a packed court saw the SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee) filing a suit in the court of senior sub-judge D.S. Chatha in Amritsar, on 12 August, against the government claiming Rs 1,000 crores for damages to the movable and immovable property of the Golden Temple and 42 other gurdwaras during Operation Bluestar in June 1984.

Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the president of the SGPC and the committee's secretary, Bhan Singh, were the two petitioners. The suit cited the Union of India and the Punjab government as the defendants and observed that the Akal Takht, the Darshini Deori, the Tosha Khana, the Teja Singh Samundari Hall and the Parikrama were extensively damaged. It asked for payment of damages amounting to Rs 200 crores for the Akal Takht, Rs 200 crores for the Tosha Khana, Rs 10 crores for the Guru Ram Das Sarai and Rs 210 crores for the stores of the Sri Akal Takht and the Sri Darbara Sahib.

The damages caused to Sikh shrines has always made things difficult for the centre ever since it tried to propagate "the healing touch" after Operation Bluestar. Punjab-watchers have always maintained that no matter how rational the common Sikhs may be, there will always exist a sense of deep injury to his self-respect as long as he remembers that the Golden Temple was "attacked" by the security forces. The SGPC seems to be capitalising precisely on this as it is trying to enhance its role



The Harimandir Sahib under repair

in Punjab politics. At the time of filing the suit, Mr Tohra was desperate in his efforts to discredit the Punjab accord and embarrass Sant Longowal. Actually, even before filing the suit, the SGPC had adopted a resolution calling upon the government to apologise for Operation Bluestar and demanding an assurance against the future entry of security forces into the Golden Temple and the gurdwaras.

The suit has prayed that the "attack" on the Golden Temple complex and several gurdwaras by the armed forces, paramilitary forces and the police was wholly unwarranted, unprovoked, deliberate, wanton, malicious and designed by the then ruling party for gaining political advantage by dubious and unlawful methods." The suit also prayed for the issuance of a mandatory injunction directing the defendants to tender an "unqualified apology" before the Sikh masses for "having caused a deep sense of injury to the honour

and self-respect of Sikhs." Pointing to the destruction of life and property caused by the security forces it said that valuable records of the gurdwaras were destroyed including certain manuscripts written by the Sikh gurus and historic documents

preserved for centuries.

The suit maintains that since some of the buildings were repaired by the government in violation of the Sikh tenets and traditions, the SGPC would have to dismantle and demolish them before reconstruction work could begin. This, according to the SGPC, would amount to an additional financial burden of Rs 100 crores. The SGPC claims that between 3 June and 31 August when gurdwaras were "attacked", it lost Rs 500 crores worth of property.

While the petition also mentions that the "unlawful" occupation of some gurdwaras upto the date is causing a loss of about Rs 20 crores, it appears as if the SGPC is worried about its pecuniary problems, apart from its political status. This was also evident from the fact that no court fee was paid for the suit under Order 33 of the Civil Procedure Code on the plea that the petitioners did not have sufficient means.

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

LAW AND ORDER

Delhi's Trigger-happy Policemen

The patient lying in ward number 22, room number 43, of the Safdarjung hospital in New Delhi, his skull swathed in bandages, is the victim of a strange case of mistaken identities. Thirty-four-year-old Anil Kumar Agarwal, owner of Iyer and Company, a flourishing travel agency in the capital, was returning home after a get together with friends when he was shot at by a sub-inspector of the Delhi police in north Delhi on 20 August. Later, the Delhi police simply called the shooting a "mistake" but all the same it was an act of grave irresponsibility.

Earlier that day, a chocolate-coloured Fiat car (DBH 69) owned by K.C. Kaushik had been stolen from East Patel Nagar. Two robbers threw Kaushik out of the car at gun-point and made away with the vehicle. Kaushik lodged a complaint and all major police stations in the capital were alerted about the theft. After ten pm on 20 August, the station house officer (SHO) of the Kashmir Gate police station in north Delhi thought he had seen the wanted car, gave it chase and warned the SHOs of the

neighbouring areas about the presence of the car. Soon sub-inspector Balbir Singh, from his station in Police Lines, was also in hot pursuit but neither of them, bothered to carefully read the numberplate of the car, nor did they mark its colour. The registration number of the car they were chasing was DEH 69 and not DBH 69 which was the one that had been stolen. Besides, its colour was green instead of chocolate.

The "chase" went on for less than a kilometre with Anil Agarwal driving towards his home in Timarpur, unaware that police vehicles were in pursuit. According to the Delhi police, they tried their best to stop the car by blowing their horns. "But," says Anil Agarwal, "My car is airconditioned and the glasses are tinted. I got no hint that I was being chased. Besides, I had no reason to believe that the police was wanting me." The police, in its defence, also said that they tried to stop Agarwal's car by trying to come in its way but "since our Jeeps could not match the speed of the Fiat, that could not be done."

The police claimed that they tried to shoot up the Fiat's tyres. Balbir Singh missed the tyres succeeded in his hitting Anil Agarwal. The bullet went through Agarwal's cheek and stuck in the throat. The injured businessman was rushed to the Bara Hindu Rao hospital nearby but had to be shifted to the Safdarjung hospital about ten kilometres away. Here too, the callousness of the Delhi police was evident. No police vehicle or assistance was available to the innocent victim either at Bara Hindu Rao hospital or at the Safdarjung hospital. And according to the Agarwal family, nobody from the police had come to them "even to express their apologies." Rather than do that, the police headquarters said that they were not planning to take any action as sub-inspector Balbir Singh had *bonafide* reasons for firing at Anil Agarwal. So while Balbir Singh remains unpunished for what was decidedly an irresponsible act, Anil Agarwal, lies in hospital, nursing stitches and paying for it.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

MAHARASHTRA

Rule by Default

Administrative lapses increase under the new CM

While Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has been stressing the value of education, about 3,000 applications to open new schools in rural areas are lying with the Maharashtra government. According to government sources, permission was given to open about 1,000 schools in the last two years and a decision not to give permission to other new schools until a review was made of their functioning was taken. Exceptions would be made where recommendations for schools are made by the deputy director, education. Such applications are still awaiting approval even though the new school terms have already begun.

The same ennui exists in other areas of the administration since

Shivajirao Nilangekar Patil took over as chief minister in June this year. The most serious lapses have been the government's inability to revamp the house repairs board and constitute the district level planning and development boards and the *taluka* level coordinating committees. In Bombay, nearly 100 people lost their lives in house collapses this year, and even though the government repeats after every collapse that it will revamp the house repairs board, nothing has been done so far as the board lacks funds and proper management. The board has Rs eight crores as funds but there are nearly 350 buildings in a "dangerous" condition that are liable to collapse at any time. Among other matters

which need the government's consideration is the Sanjay Gandhi Nisadhar Yagna started by former chief minister A.R. Antulay, for widows and destitutes. It has not been constituted under the new chief minister and so no funds are being given to these needy people. The district planning and development committee, of which the chief minister is the chairman and MPs and MLAs are members, is yet to be constituted and until it takes place, plans for development projects in the districts cannot be started even though provisions have been made. Likewise, at the *taluka* levels, there are no committees to review the progress of on-going works.

Other statutory and autonomous corporations like the Maharashtra state road transport corporation, the Maharashtra state electricity board, the land development bank boards and several others have to be reconstituted or vacancies of non-officials have to be filled. Even the Maharashtra pollution control board, (its term expired on 6 June) is still functioning because the government has been

unable to constitute a board. The board members of SICOM, MSFC and other institutions, concerned with the industrial development of Maharashtra also have to be changed.

Maharashtra's autonomous institutions are being run by bureaucrats and the voice of the people is not heard. Elected representatives of the people like MLAs, MPs and party activists who are nominated as non-official members of the boards so that they can voice the grievances or expectations of the people can be nominated only by the chief minister. Today this voice has been silenced and the concept of a functioning democracy is being bypassed ironically enough, by the elected representative.

Of course, the chief minister himself has to take decisions, but even he is not an elected representative. The chief minister who was not given a ticket to contest the Assembly elections was recently made a member of the Legislative Council in place of Prabha Rao who was elected to the state Legislative Assembly. This term is for one year and has given rise to speculation that Shivajirao Nilangekar-Patil will be chief minister for only one year.

The chief minister's hands are



Shivajirao Nilangekar-Patil: not without controversy

literally tied. He has not been allowed to expand his cabinet or even have a reshuffle. His cabinet is packed with men loyal to former chief minister Vasantdada Patil and that he lacks a homogenous team was evident on the floor of the House during the recent Assembly elections. He got away relatively unscathed only because Sharad Pawar, leader of the opposition, chose to keep a low profile. On the other hand the state government has been saddled with a corrupt image, a legacy of

Vasantdada Patil. The Rs. 10 crore Dharavi land scandal still looms large and the two ministers who were involved are now in Mr Nilangekar Patil's cabinet. Mr Nilangekar-Patil, it is understood, is keen to at least drop some of Vasantdada Patil's men, and induct his own followers but this too has not been allowed.

Meanwhile, the chief minister's reputation suffers every time the issue of cabinet expansion is raised. He had promised to accommodate the various factions in the party and in his cabinet and also take a Marathi-speaking person from Bombay into the ministry. When he became the chief minister in June, he had said he would do both before the monsoon session of the state Legislature and later claimed that the changes would take place after the session. After the session came to an end in the second week of August, he told the press that he would soon expand his cabinet which would have a total of 40 ministers and ministers of state. However, after his return from Delhi he has had to inform the people that he would expand his cabinet anytime before or after the winter session of the state Legislature which begins on 7 January 1986.

Oga Tella, Bombay

EDUCATION

Games in the Classroom

Come 1986 and Jadavpur University, Calcutta, will launch two refreshingly ambitious programmes: a post-graduate degree course in film studies and a three-year BSc course in sports. The two courses promise to break new ground since no other university in the country offers an MA degree in films (the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune does not have a post-graduate degree course) or a BSc degree in sports.

It all began when Surajit Sengupta, a renowned footballer and joint secretary of the Footballers' Welfare Association, suggested to the university to introduce a three-year degree course in sports at the undergraduate level. The university responded by setting up a committee to look into the possibilities of adopting sports as a scientific discipline in the curriculum. Besides Mr Sengupta, popular Bengal cricketer Raju Mukherjee and the then deputy secretary (sports), government of West Bengal, Ashok

Bhattacharya were among those included in the committee.

The course, according to the draft proposal framed by the committee, aims to encourage students to take up a career in sports. The proposed syllabus includes three subjects: the theory and philosophy of sports and games at the honours level, general education with sports journalism and an elective subject to be chosen by the candidate for specialisation from the nine disciplines offered in the category. However, only two disciplines, football and cricket, will be offered in the first session. Practicals have been given importance and sports medicine forms an essential part of the course.

The first proposal for the film course was initiated five years ago by the internationally acclaimed filmmaker Satyajit Ray, while receiving the honorary doctorate conferred on him by the university. Acting on his suggestion, a film committee was formed. Two mem-

bers of the committee, Mihir Ranjan Bhattacharya and Dr Yashodhara Bagchi, visited the film institute in Pune and decided upon the curriculum. Prof. Satish Bahadur of the Pune institute and the noted film critic Samik Bandyopadhyay were also actively involved. A few educational films have already been made on an experimental basis and film directors like Mrinal Sen have been approached to conduct shooting demonstrations.

According to the dean of students, Himendu Biswas, the aim of the MA course is "not to churn out filmstars but filmscholars." It will be primarily theoretical in content with special weightage to film appreciation. It thus, distinguishes itself in its outlook from any other endeavour in this direction. The post-graduate course in film studies has got the go-ahead and studies are to begin as soon as the UGC grant is received.

Soma Guha, Calcutta

KERALA

Dispute Without End

A seven-years strike remains unresolved

The seven-year-old strike by the Nadar Mahajan Sangha (NMS) in Kēraja to press for reservations in proportion to their population, possibly belongs to the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Ever since a few members of the NMS marched to the "satyagraha" gate of the Trivandrum secretariat on 14 March 1978, three ministries of different hues have left their imprint on the state's history. But beneath the huge tree that shades the main gate of the state secretariat, the thatched shed of the NMS strikers stands like a fort. For each of the 2,629 days of the strike, members of the NMS have been on a relay hunger-strike.

The Nadars (incidentally, the late K. Kamaraj was a Nadar) are secular and, in fact, see no religious barriers: in a Nadar family there could be Hindus as well as Christians. "So when it came to reservation we were neglected," said Kadavil Chandran, president of the NMS. The Nattoor commission which studied the problem of reservation in Kerala said that there were not enough Nadars to warrant a special quota. But the NMS claims a strength of 25 lakh Nadars, concentrated in the Trivandrum and Idukki districts. When P.K. Vasudevan was the chief minister, the Nadars were granted one per cent reservation and the Nadar girls were granted scholarships for studies on the basis of their financial status. Most of the Nadars are palm-tappers by profession and Mr Nair appointed an enquiry committee to study their problems. The recommendations of the committee are yet to be considered. However, the present government has already appointed a special officer to implement the committee's report.

Is this then a case of "always asking for more?" The relay hunger strike goes on like an epic drama. The NMS has *shakhas* or units spread throughout the state and each unit is expected to send members in turn. There are also members like K.B.A. John, a member of the board of the directors of the NMS who, sitting inside the thatched *satyagraha* hut told SUNDAY: "I must have lain here for about three years. I think if tomorrow morning nobody comes to continue the relay I will stay here, fast throughout the day and eat something at night." Nevertheless, there are days when the pandal is empty.

Kadavil Chandran, who has just been awarded his doctorate for a comparative study of Hindi and Malayalam poets is not very optimistic about the strike being called off soon. Said he: "Most of our demands are yet to be conceded. Now only Christian Nadars belonging to the Church of South India and Hindu Nadars are benefitted by reservations. We have

also got other demands like free land from the government for a Kamaraj Memorial centre in Trivandrum."

Observers here, however, feel that Nadars have got more than they deserve. Talks with the government takes place at periodic intervals, more as a routine and less as an effort to end the longest strike in the country. Interestingly, no slogans are shouted by the NMS strikers; they sit there watching as new *satyagrahis* come and go. And each morning the hunger-striker pastes the number of the new day.

Bino K. John, Trivandrum

RAJASTHAN

Problems of Image

"**D**humil chair waton ek ho (politicians with tarnished image be united)," is the slogan being given by those who were denied Congress(I) tickets for another term in the state Vidhan Sabhas during the March 1985 Assembly elections.

The slogan was first raised in Rajasthan by Shriram Gotewala who was among the seven ministers in the state to be denied party tickets when in the eyes of the high command they did not have a good reputation on account of their unclean image. In all, about 1,100 sitting MLAs including 70 ministers were not given Congress (I) tickets, for this reason.

On denial of a party ticket, Mr Gotewala, who was Rajasthan's minister of state for cooperatives and animal husbandry in former chief minister Shiv Charan Mathur's cabinet, had come out openly against the party high command for its arbitrary behaviour. Now he has appealed through a letter addressed to all "his party-men with tarnished images" to unite and fight the injustice done to them. The letter explains that as a result of denial of Congress(I) tickets the people at large have started considering them to be the persons condemned by the party. "It could not have been a situation worse than this," the letter says. It went on, "If such accusations were made by any government or an individual, the accused person could get his linen cleaned by having recourse to legal remedy. But the unfortunate condemnation by the party high command could not

have been dealt with in this manner. The condemnation in the form of denial of a party ticket without providing the condemned persons any opportunity of an explanation or defence has made people believe that they really have an unclean image. No self-respecting person can live in this atmosphere of condemnation in public eyes with no way to explain his position."

The recent induction of a few such "condemned" persons in high positions appears to have come as a morale-booster for these politicians. This has given them a chance to take up cudgels with the party high command. The letter goes on to say, "one of these condemned Congress (I) members was fortunate enough to get a berth in Bihar cabinet and still another friend from amongst us was more fortunate to become chief minister of Maharashtra. Still another has been elected to Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra but the remaining large bulk of us still stand condemned with no way to vindicate one's position."

Mr Gotewala explained that with the stigma of an "unclean image," he finds it difficult to face his friends, relatives and the public. "I do not know how exactly you feel, but in my humble opinion your feelings cannot be different," he says in his letter. "If your feelings are similar to that of mine, should all those legislators and ministers who were denied Congress(I) tickets in the March 1985 Assembly elections meet to discuss their position?"—he has suggested Jaipur as the venue of such a conference.

Atul Chaudhary, Jaipur

ORISSA

J.B.Patnaik's Losing Battle

Will K.P. Singh Deo succeed him?

Immediately after his return from Delhi on 10 August, Orissa chief minister J B Patnaik told reporters that he knew the press would state in the next morning's papers that he had not met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during his six day stay in the capital. What Patnaik wanted to stress was that the press would play up an event which was not worth noting. But the Congress(I) partymen in Orissa do not agree.

Said a prominent Congress(I) legislator, "We were in touch with our MPs in Delhi ever since the Prime Minister returned after his two day visit to Orissa (on 26 and 27 July) and particularly during and after the chief minister's Delhi visit. The MPs tell us that Patnaik's days are numbered." No one, however, actually knows when the J B Patnaik era which has lasted over five years will end. But one thing is clear: Patnaik has lost his firm grip on the party and the government. According to some partymen and officers who have been close to him, the chief minister has been feeling insecure right from the beginning of his second term. He is no longer in the Prime Minister's good books. Patnaik is not on good terms with Arun Singh, Natwar Singh, V P Singh and Arjun Singh since he knows that they support union minister of state for personnel and administrative reforms K P Singh Deo who is from Orissa.

It appeared that Patnaik was very apprehensive when Natwar Singh came on a four day visit to Orissa in early June and met his adversaries in the Congress(I) and others like Nandini Satpathy, Kahnu Charan Lenka, Basant Kumar Biswal and several top officials. Political observers attached greater significance to Natwar Singh's "political mission" as he completely ignored Patnaik during the last three days of his stay at a Janata leader, Anang Uday Singh Deo's house at Bhubaneswar because he is K P Singh Deo's first cousin.

The furious Patnaik lobby criticised Natwar Singh for his "destabilising" political activities in Orissa with the help of the chief minister's "enemies from the opposition parties." But as the campaign did not have any effect on the high command, Patnaik sent his revenue minister Jugal Kishore Patnaik, to Delhi soon after Natwar Singh had

left Bhubaneswar on a fact finding mission to the capital. But Jugal Patnaik made little headway. After reports that Mr Singh had submitted a paper on the J B Patnaik government to the high command, the chief minister's wife, Jayanti Patnaik MP, however, secured a letter from Natwar Singh saying that his mission to Bhubaneswar was not directed against Patnaik. The CM temporarily saved his image among his supporters in the state Congress(I), but Natwar Singh has continued to be a source of worry to Patnaik. The union minister of state for steel who again visited Orissa on 3 and 4 August to visit the mini steel plant of K P Singh Deo's brother at Dhenkan



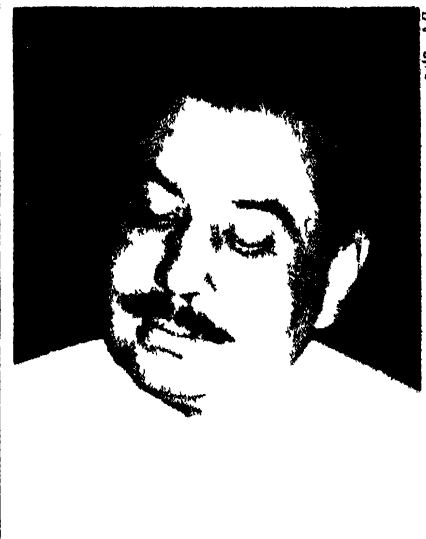
J.B. Patnaik, cornered

al, has made several statements about Patnaik which could be ominous for the chief minister. His reference to K P Singh Deo as the "future chief minister" has been taken by the Congress(I) quite seriously. These circles claim that if K P Singh Deo is unwilling to enter state politics for the time being, someone else would be chosen in consultation with him to replace Patnaik in the near future.

Natwar Singh's visits and the Prime Minister's trip have led to speculation about Patnaik's future. Though some political observers feel that Rajiv Gandhi did not come on a "political inspection," it is clear that he had a first-hand knowledge of Patnaik's much-trumpeted "progress" and war against poverty. Mr Gandhi obviously felt after seeing

thousands of starving and diseased people in Kalahandi and Phulbani that the schemes were poorly implemented. Patnaik, who was reportedly called to Delhi on 5 August, could not meet the Prime Minister despite his best efforts, but was handed over a two page letter from the PM suggesting measures that would have to be taken in right earnest to help the poor. The letter mentioned "widespread poverty, extreme hunger and acute scarcity,"—facts which Patnaik and his revenue minister had been denying.

Patnaik is, however, trying to put up a brave front in his bid to maintain his grip on the party rank and file. He has dismissed Mr Gandhi's letter as a "usual correspondence" although his information and public relations department released what is now known as a "censored version" of the letter. At a press conference on 13 August J B Patnaik, when asked whether he would release the complete text of the letter,



K.P. Singh Deo future CM?

evaded the question. The CM has tried his best to counter earlier reports that his government tried to hide the catastrophe by helping people in a few selected areas a week before Gandhi's visit. He even tried to convince newsmen that there were no efforts by his government to discourage the PM from visiting some of the interior villages.

But there are indications that his trusted lieutenant Basant Biswal who had turned against him because he was denied a ticket to contest the Assembly polls, is planning to return to the fold. If Biswal, a powerful figure in state politics does patch up his feud with the Patnaik family, it might be possible for the chief minister, to breathe a little easier.

Sarada, P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

BIHAR

Unhealthy Tactics

Health department violates court orders

"Health of the health department is itself very unhealthy and doctors, medical students and others in the services of the department constitute a fair number of litigants of this court from time to time on account of vagaries of the department," remarked Justices H.L. Agrawal and R.C. Sinha of Patna High Court in June 1983, while disposing of a petition challenging the *ad hoc* appointments in Bihar's health department. Now, after more than two years, instead of recovering, the department has deteriorated further. To top it all, laws are being "made" to violate the directives of the courts—be it the Patna High Court or the Supreme Court—as the health department is preparing to regularise the appointments of more than 2,700 doctors appointed on *ad hoc* basis since 1979. The Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) practically has no say in this matter.

The High Court had instructed the state government to regularise the appointments of the doctors by way of competitive examinations comprising a written and an oral test, within six months after the judgment (delivered on 31 December 1983). It had then ruled that doctors who were not duly regularised within the period, stood dismissed automatically. The court order allowed the state government to relax the upper age limit of the *ad hoc* appointees who would have to take the tests but asked not to give them any other advantage. When the Bihar government appealed to the Supreme Court, the six month period was extended by a further two months. However, Bihar's health minister, Saryu Mishra, has already instructed his officials to regularise these privileged appointees. While Mishra told SUNDAY that the government had the power to do so, chief minister Bideswari Dubey said that the regularisation would be done through interviews thus avoiding the written tests as decreed by the High Court.

The *ad hoc* appointments violated other prescribed norms as well: the constitutional provision of reservations for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was not honoured; the candidates' merits were ignored; and if some doctors' allegations are to be believed, money changed hands. The

Supreme Court sent a show cause notice to the department for contempt of court in mid-April for violating its directive and the court is yet to dispose of it. But in the meantime the department allowed another 27 *ad hoc* appointments with retrospective effect from 1983 on the pretext that arrangements for these appointments were in the process of completion before the court orders.

A spokesman of the the Junior Doctors Front opposing these *ad hoc* appointments said that among those appointed on *ad hoc* basis during this period was the son of a minister. The

minister's son is one of the lucky few to have been promoted as an assistant professor. This was against the normal practice of not promoting *ad hoc* appointees. In more than 200 cases, *ad hoc* doctors were granted two years' study leave to pursue post-graduate courses when their appointments were for a period of six months only. In some cases leave was granted from the very first day of their service. Under the rule, this privilege is only given to commissioned doctors who have completed two years of service.

Dr U.P. Varma, who was the health minister during Jagannath Mishra's chief ministership, had requested the BPSC to advertise for all the vacant posts including those held by the *ad hoc* appointees in order to fill them up "constitutionally" during 1981-82. But soon he was shifted to another department and the advertisement was withdrawn without assigning any reason. The "ad hocism" continued unabated and while the number of such appointments was well above 2,700 several meritorious doctors remained unemployed. More so, doctors with negative marks too were appointed on *ad hoc* basis.

The BPSC had, in the past, turned down three requests of the Bihar government to give its concurrence to regularise the *ad hoc* appointees; while it was directed by the court to adopt constitutional methods, the state government, for obvious reasons, withdrew from the legal process and pressed the commission to give its concurrence. What Dr Varma had in mind while requesting the commission to advertise for permanent posts ("against the ad hocism") must have been guided by a spirit to follow the tradition of not bypassing constitutional authorities.

In the meantime, chief minister Bideswari Dubey has asked the new BPSC chairman, A.K.M. Hasan, to take a middle path between the health minister's outright regularisation without involving the commission and the court's order to regularise only through competitive written examinations arranged by the commission. Mr Hasan is understood to have been asked to conduct oral interviews by an experts' panel and do away with the written test. Interestingly, it is easier to manipulate oral interviews when it comes to ignoring the meritorious ones to make way for the sons and wards of influential people. The battle lines are now clearly drawn between 2,700 *ad hoc* appointees enjoying the government's patronage and 5,000 unemployed doctors.



Striking Bihar doctors demonstrating in Patna

Yuvaraj Ghimre, Patna

BIHAR

Was Brother Cherian Framed?

Vice-principal of a school accused of sodomy

An unsuspecting vice principal of the Loyola High School in Patna greeted the inspector of Pataliputra police station when the latter visited the institution on 17 July. Brother Cherian guided the police officer to the principal's office as he thought that the inspector must have come to see the principal for his son who was a student of the school. But to his utter surprise the Brother was told that he was under arrest on charges of alleged sodomy.

On 16 July Dr Gopal Prasad Sinha, an associate professor of the Patna Medical College and Hospital had lodged an FIR at the Pataliputra police station alleging that Brother Cherian "attempted to commit an unnatural offence," involving his son Ajay Kumar who was a student of the seventh standard. The arrest of Brother Cherian took everyone by surprise since the police made no attempt to verify the allegation. On 17 July the vice principal was produced in court and his bail petition was rejected on the ground that it was a case of attempted sodomy.

Most of the missionaries of the city felt that Brother Cherian was framed and this was yet another instance of the harassment the missionaries were being subjected to in Bihar. Moreover Dr Sinha had used his political connections to have the Brother arrested. Under the leadership of Bishop Benedict Costa, all the heads of the missionary institutions in Patna decided to close down

their schools till the case was withdrawn and an enquiry set up. All we ask for is justice," said S M Liceria, principal of the Patna Women's College. Hard pressed by the missionaries and the parents of the 12,000 odd students, the chief minister decided to set up a one man enquiry committee headed by R N Dash, commissioner, Patna division to enquire into the allegation. However a large section of the people in Patna have expressed doubts about the impartiality of the commission. Moreover at the time of filing this report two weeks have since passed but the report is far from complete. According to reliable sources it has been "dumped." Reason the report was going to expose a large number of high ranking police officials and bureaucrats including a Congress(I) MP who was desperately trying to hush up the whole matter.

Most of the teachers this correspondent spoke to were of the opinion that Ajay Kumar was a spoiled child. Of late Ajay and his friend Ravi were constantly defying the school authorities. They hardly came in school uniforms and regularly received bad remarks from Brother Cherian. On one occasion the Brother called for Ajay's mother, Indira Sinha. Ms Sinha, who contested the Assembly elections on a Congress(I) ticket and lost, was irked at this incident and she vowed to take revenge. Naveen, Ajay's friend and accomplice in most of his mis-

deeds, also enjoys a notorious reputation at school. In April this year, he stole two bicycles from the school to buy a revolver. When Naveen brought home the revolver, his father, a professor of economics at the Patna University, was so furious that he locked his son up in a room. Naveen freed himself and disappeared only to surface a week later in Ajay's house. There are several inconsistencies in Ajay's statement to the police. The FIR states that the "unnatural act" was attempted on 14 July when Ajay had come to play table tennis in school. But at that time Brother Cherian was busy instructing 30 odd students and all through he was in the company of Brother Jose.

The missionaries used the incident to voice their protest against growing harassment of the Church by the administration in Bihar. According to a source who wished to remain unnamed, the school authorities are constantly requested by politicians, bureaucrats and top police officials to admit their wards. When such requests are turned down the process of intimidation starts. Precious little was done when a Jesuit priest was murdered in Sasaram a few months back. Later an American priest Fr Martinsek was shot and he died in Mokameh's Nazareth Hospital. At the Tripolia Hospital in Patna municipal authorities connived to manipulate documents to prove that they did not pay taxes for several years. Last year a Congress(I) MLA entered the Kurji Holy Family Hospital and fired a few rounds from his gun after he was refused permission to visit a patient.

The press of the city decided to side with the powerful Indira Sinha. In an interview published in a daily she said that she had found out from the maid servants of Kurji Holy Family Hospital that Brother Cherian was a man of questionable character. Her husband, Dr Gopal Prasad, denied that there was any conspiracy against the missionaries. He added, "We are connected with politics and politicians but it is the missionaries who are adopting pressure tactics by closing the schools. I am ready to go to the Supreme Court with this case just because they are a minority, the missionaries cannot do whatever they like." The 11 year old Ajay was quick to add "I am talkative, I drive a car, I go to school without a uniform but that doesn't mean I should be sodomised, after the experience I have come to know that Brother Cherian is the worst person in the world."



Father Cherian: accused



Ajay Kumar: difficult child

Patricia Gough, Patna

BANGALORE

For the Life of a Building

The death sentence on a High Court building is stayed

In what must surely be a unique case, lawyers and judges at the Karnataka High Court have had to argue and decide upon the fate of a building that is a part of their everyday life—the 116 year old Attara Cutcherry that houses the Karnataka High Court. When, finally, a writ petition filed by some prominent senior citizens against the government's decision to demolish the ancient structure was dismissed last year, one would have thought that the controversy would come to an end and with it, the Attara Cutcherry. Undaunted, the petitioners sought special leave application and approached the Supreme Court to save the building from demolition.

Last fortnight a Supreme Court bench directed the state government to reconsider the decision to demolish, virtually reversing the decision of the High Court and giving a new twist to the controversy. Once again, the fate of the building hangs in the balance. What makes the case intriguing is that the judges of the Karnataka High Court notwithstanding the dismissal of a petition, are themselves in favour of the demolition of the existing structure. The lawyers are divided over the issue and the state government, indecisive.

The Attara Cutcherry is a building of enchanting beauty and grace. The red brick Grecian edifice was built by Mr Bowring between 1864 and 1868 when he was the commissioner of Mysore. The edifice cost about Rs 45 lakhs by the time it was completed in 1868.

For almost a century the Attara

Cutcherry in Bangalore housed the secretariat and much later even the legislature. When Kengal Hanumanthiah, the former chief minister, built the Vidhana Soudha, a massive granite structure opposite the Attara Cutcherry in 1956, the executive and the legislature moved over to the other side of the road and the judiciary became the sole possessor of the building. This arrangement of having the judiciary and the legislature on either side of the Dr Ambedkar Avenue has, over the years, become a landmark in Bangalore.

The decision to demolish the building was taken during the last days of the Gundu Rao government. The Janata government which came to power thereafter appeared reluctant to demolish the edifice, but later bowed to the wishes of the judges, although the public works minister, Mr Deve Gowda, put it on record that the building was stable and would last for a further 25 years with some repairs and that the government was only obliging the judges.

The government also took the opinion of several experts, including Achuta Rao, a UN expert. The Achuta Rao report supported Mr Deve Gowda's contention that the building was structurally sound and could do with some repairs costing about Rs 50 lakhs. Around the same time, architecture students of a local engineering college also presented a paper at a national workshop, arguing that the building need not be demolished and that repairs were

sufficient to prolong its life. The government however, decided to go ahead with the demolition, even after considering these reports. Apart from the judges' inclination, the government also took into consideration the fact that the High Court needed more floor space. The Gangaram building collapse also appears to have weighed in the final decision. It was then decided that a similar structure with the same facade at a cost of Rs 11 crores would be built after demolishing the old structure.

The decision provoked a good deal of controversy and the matter figured prominently on the floor of the legislature. Several prominent people, aware of the architectural, aesthetic and historical significance of the monument appealed to the government not to go ahead with the proposed demolition. When the government paid no heed, several senior and respected citizens from different walks of life, among them well known rationalist and educationist, Dr H Narasimhaiah and actor Anant Nag, filed a petition before the Karnataka High Court seeking to avert the demolition and declaring it a protected monument.

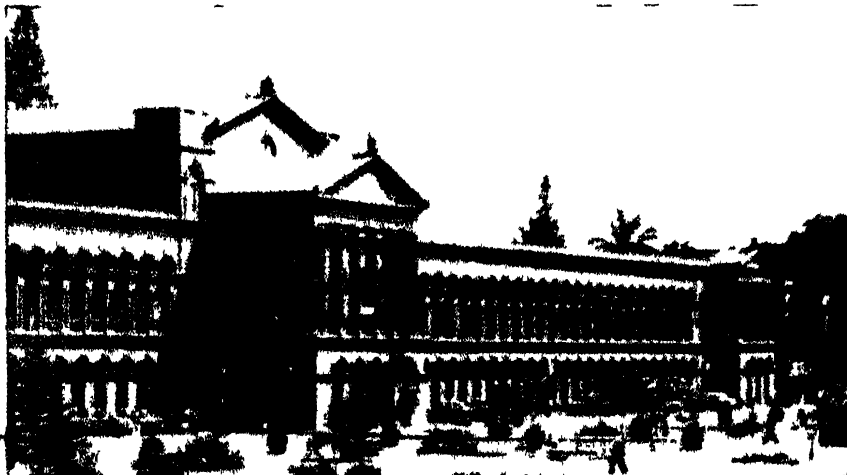
In the ensuing case the petitioners argued at length for the preservation of the building which they said was a part of ancient legacy that any city would treasure. The building is also a symbolic "connecting chord" between the past and the present. The petitioners argued that the government decision did not speak of an understanding of the priceless nature of the historic monument in terms of its cultural value and architectural beauty.

Even as the case was moving on to a climax, preparations were already underway to demolish the structure. It was also decided to invite the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr Chandrachud, to lay the foundation stone of the new building, a replica of the Attara Cutcherry, which is to be built at a cost of Rs 20 crores (as per revised estimates).

On 16 August 1984, Justice Venkatachalaiah and Justice Vittal Rao of the Karnataka High Court dismissed the petition filed by Anant Nag and others, at the same time rejecting an oral application seeking a certificate of fitness to appeal to the Supreme Court. However, the petitioners sought a special leave application. The Supreme Court took up the case in the middle of August without going into the merits of the case suggesting that the state government should reconsider the decision to demolish the building under the Karnataka Ancient Monuments Act.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

The Attara Cutcherry not just another old building





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United India will be there tomorrow.

Watching, guarding, anticipating.

Whatever. Wherever.



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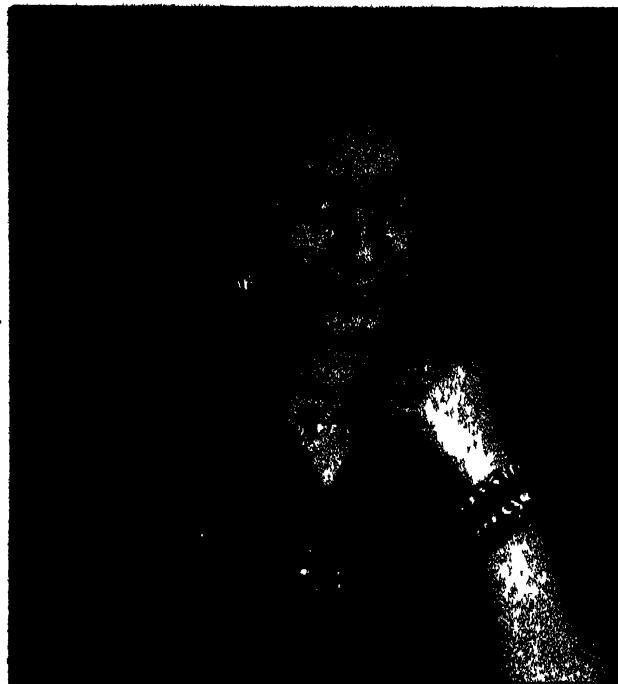
So that people may dare to dream.



First it was Dhar mendra and Hema who became parents, and now it is the turn of *Deepti* and *Pra-kash Jha*. *Deepti*, who is expecting her first child in January, is busy finishing all her commitments before she leaves for her home in New York in late October. The proud mother-to-be who had initially decided to have a baby only after three years of marriage has apparently changed her mind. Her pregnancy also belies the speculation of her imminent divorce. *Pra-kash* is also planning to shoot a film in Rajasthan with *Deepti* in the lead role. *Deepti*'s domestic as well as professional problems seem to be fast sorting out.

One wonders what has suddenly gone wrong with the *Hero* pair *Meenakshi Seshadri* and *Jackie Shroff*. At the sets of one of their recent films, the cold vibes between the two almost but froze the rest of the unit. The two of them not only disregarded the simple courtesy of greeting each other but ignored one another all throughout the day.

One person who has taken the maxim, 'Love thy neighbour' seriously is *Shatrughan Sinha*. During his recent visit he fell in love with Pakistan and since his return he has been trying to instil this love among his colleagues in the film industry. Apart from making a lot of friends, he also had a long meeting with President Zia-ul Haq during which, according to *Shatru*, they discussed a number of crucial problems concerning the two countries. "I found the man to be very civilised and courteous. My meeting with him helped me to understand the man and the leader better. He showed a lot of concern for the people of India and



Meenakshi Seshadri: Ignoring the hero

Mahesh P. Shah



Deepti Naval: in the family way

Raju Upadhyay

assured me that he would try his best to improve relations between the two countries. I was also surprised when he showed interest in the Indian film industry," *Shatru* says. "He even knows that Manoj Kumar is making a film with the Pakistani star couple Mohammad Ali and Zeb," he adds. The meeting with the President over, *Shatru* did not forget to call on cricketer Mohsin Khan and wife Reena, who was his colleague not so long ago. *Shatru*'s romance with Pakistan continues unabated. He dresses in Pakistani outfits, talks incessantly about the country to everyone who is willing to listen and even encourages friends to visit Pakistan.

Even before *Priya Tendulkar* could find a firm foothold in cinema, she had been the talk of the industry. There were rumours about her divorce—the man in question was Kannada actor Anant Nag with whom she had supposedly been married for seven years. And now, she is being accused of breaking up Barkha Roy's (sister of Reena Roy) marriage. *Priya* retorts angrily, "How can I divorce a husband who never existed?" And as for this man Mahesh Anand (a top model), he was just my leading man in a film."

Hema and *Dharmendra* are a set of disappointed parents. The birth of a girl instead of a boy has been a sad let-down especially as the doctors had confirmed after a sonography test that it would be a boy. Hema, of course, has decided not to show her disappointment. "A girl is as good as a boy. Didn't I achieve so much even though I am a girl?" she asks. Hema will shortly be returning to work and she is scheduled to resume work with a TV serial written by Gulzar.

For the Love of Tennis

The Tennis Players Association of India has taken up the noble task of unearthing and nurturing promising young tennis players throughout the country. The organisation has forged ahead though it has had to cross many hurdles.

Of the 20 top tennis players in the world, six are from Sweden, a country where ice-hockey and table-tennis are the most popular sports. They are all young men, who were presented with tennis rackets when they were children and told to emulate Bjorn Borg, Martina Navratilova and Ivan Lendl, two tennis stars who have already booked their places in the hall of fame of tennis, are from Czechoslovakia, which has no tradition as a tennis-playing nation. Here too, tennis is booming under the careful supervision of the state sponsored coaches. It was the same with Australia in the late Fifties and Sixties when the phalanx from Down Under ruled the tennis courts of the world. Behind the all-conquering brigade led by Rod Laver was Harry Hopman, under whose watchful eye, the faults of the future super-stars were ironed out.

While other countries have produced champions almost overnight, India has lagged far behind. For

every Ramanathan Krishnan and Vijay Amritraj, other countries have produced top players with almost metronomic efficiency. If India has to produce a crop of leading international tennis stars, the effort will have to be more on unearthing and then nurturing tennis talent. It is on the junior tennis players that the tennis bodies will have to place their faith in.

It is this unenviable and ungla-mourous task—of producing top players—that the Tennis Players Association of India (TPA) has taken up. The TPA was formed in 1972, a stormy year for international tennis—with ex-international Naresh Kumar as the executive president and Ramanathan Krishnan and Vijay Amritraj among others as members. But the organisations which was formed with so much fanfare remained comparatively inactive for a few years. The long climb back, however, began with the Campa Fiesta, a series of exhibition matches in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras

in the late Seventies with the three Amritraj brothers—Vijay, Anand and Ashok—and Chiradeep Mukherjee as participants. "It was our way of making our body known all over the country," said Anil Gupta, the present president of the TPA who took over from Premjit Lall in 1979. The fiesta was also the first occasion when Vijay Amritraj was playing competitive tennis in the country since the 1975 Grand Prix and the national championships, immediately after. For tennis-lovers in the country and the TPA, the fiesta was a major shot in the arm. Once again, tennis ceased to be a forgotten sport in the country.

In October 1978, the TPA organised its first-ever junior tennis tournament and clinic in New Delhi. Sponsored by the Modis, it was a trail-blazer of sorts: for the first time in the country, prize money was awarded in a junior tournament, a fact which evoked tremendous criticism. "It was considered obnoxious to give prize money in those days,"



The regional final of the All India Limca juniors in progress: the search for talent

Photographs by Rajiv Basu

reminisces Gupta. "But today even the All India Lawn Tennis Association approves of it. The winners were actually given prize scholarships in the form of vouchers for buying their entire kit for the year.

Soon afterwards, the TPA organised the first comprehensive coaching scheme. The TPA, provided with land by the Delhi Development Authority, built a number of courts in the area. The two coaches, Balram and Hanuman Singh, trained 15 boys at a time: the daily sessions consisting of four hours of P.T. and tennis. Unfortunately, the complex had to be closed down just before the Asian Games because the Talkatora stadium was constructed in the area. The stretch of land provided in its stead, proved to be too far away from Delhi to attract young tennis players.

It was only last year after the Parle Group took over as sponsors that the junior tournament could become a truly "All-India" one. In order to attract more talent, the tournament was revamped to include four regional tourneys and the prize money was increased to Rs 1.25 lakhs. The winners and the runners-ups under all three age-groups (under-13, under-15 and under-18) then travelled to Delhi for the Masters tournament. The prize money amounted to Rs 50,000.

That the search for talent has yielded results is clear. Pra'eeep Raman, the most outstanding junior, was sent for a six-week intensive coaching stint to Harry Hopman's clinic in Florida. And his performance in the Southern States Junior Championships in Florida, clearly revealed his talent.

His stint with Hopman had sharpened his game. Despite being unseeded, he fought his way into the finals defeating the second-seeded player in the semi-finals. Six of the other juniors have joined Vijay Amritraj's tennis school.

The TPA's efforts to widen the net to gather new talent continues. Plans have been made to hold 12 (instead of the present four) regional tourna-



Former Indian tennis star Jaideep Mukherjee (left) with TPA president Anil Gupta

ments in 1986. These matches are likely to be held in the smaller towns like Bhubaneswar and Jamshedpur in the eastern sector, Trivandrum and Hyderabad in the southern zone and Indore, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Chandigarh in the western and northern regions, respectively. The reason: to make tennis a more broad-based activity by developing an interest in the smaller towns and spotting talent in these areas.

Such an itinerary is likely to cause major problems as there are no proper playing facilities in many of the smaller towns. "It's shocking," said Gupta. "There are one million people living in Jaipur and yet, there are potholes in every court." Tennis courts in other places are not much better with most grass courts having more weeds than grass, said Gupta. The lack of all-weather courts is likely to make it even more difficult for the development of new talent.

The urgent need, therefore, is new courts. With most of the lawn tennis associations lacking funds and the state government not interested in fostering a sport which is considered "elitist" and "expensive," the re-

sponsibility clearly falls on the industrial houses. Some firms like Parle's and ITC have already come forward. Parle's, for instance, has agreed to sponsor the building and maintenance of "public courts" along with changing rooms and gymnasiums in various parts of the country. But the problem of acquiring the land remains.

More than just development of facilities, what is necessary is a grass-roots approach to tennis. "Look at the French," said Gupta. "There are 50,000 youngsters playing tennis at the inter-school and inter-college levels. There are local councils which consist of full-time coaches and directors paid by the government of France which 'adopt' the most promising players."

"The official bodies," says Gupta, are "just voluntary organisations which have been given recognition. Most of the people in charge are ceremonial heads who are holding these positions for their own benefits." According to him, the players' grievances can hardly be met by the players of yesterday who are as conservative in their thinking as the other officials. "Men like Dilip Bose and Sumant Mishra have got more out of the game as officials of the AILTA than what they have given to the game," he said. It is necessary, said Mr Gupta, to have full-time paid directors to look after the game especially at the junior level. "Tennis will have to become an industry if we are to unearth talented players regularly," said Gupta. Only then that India will be able to make its mark in today's tremendously competitive world of professional tennis.

Srinjoy Chowdhury, Calcutta

The quest for excellence: junior boys fighting it out



Where Music is a Way of Life

The Sangeet Research Academy, a Calcutta-based charitable trust and the only one of its kind in the country, helps promising young classical musicians in their quest for excellence

"Gao, beti gao (Sing, daughter sing)" Like a loving mother helping her only child take the first faltering steps, Girija Devi hummed a few notes of the song with the five-year-old child. Suddenly she stopped playing the harmonium and in a voice that was barely audible said something to the small girl. When she started to play again, the little child's voice took wing and as the notes flowed out, Girija Devi smiled, flashing her brilliant teeth. Happiness was writ all over her face. Her pupil had done her proud.

Set amidst sylvan surroundings, far away from the bustle of Calcutta's streets is the Sangeet Research Academy (SRA). Housed in a historic mansion, filled with the memories of Tipoo Sultan's descendants, the SRA is the only organisation of its kind in

the country nurturing promising young Indians to flower into acknowledged musicians. The SRA is thus unique in that it tries to keep alive the *Gurukul* system, so important to Indian classical music. It is not unusual therefore, on any morning, to find young Rashid Khan practising in Nisar Hussain Khan's bungalow while almost cheek by jowl is housewife Dalia Raut doing her *riaz* in Girija Devi's residence. Often one hears a few sentences blurted out in anger by the *guru*, but then as one of the scholars said, "It is all part of the tradition. How will I learn if the *guru* does not shout at me for my mistakes?"

Girija Devi and her pupil are both an inseparable part of that tradition kept alive through the centuries: the *guru-sishya parampara*. "The collapse of this system has brought

about a degeneration in the art," said noted vocalist and director of the SRA, Vijay Kichlu. Said he, "Unless we go back to the system of a father teaching his son, no perfect musician can be produced. Today's system is a commercial one. Anyone, whether he or she possesses the talent or not, goes to a musician, pays him some money to learn the art. But art cannot be bought with money. It requires love and dedication. There should be," asserted Mr Kichlu, "a transfer of personality and an emotional relationship between the teacher and the taught."

It is to help such a relationship grow and produce a good musician that the SRA was launched. Conceived by Vijay Kichlu and fostered by the last chairman of ITC, A.N. Haksar, who wanted to do something lasting for classical music, SRA came



Girija Devi with one of her young pupils: preserving the *guru-sishya parampara*

into being in 1977. Created as a public charitable trust—with such glittering stars as Satyajit Ray, Arvind Parikh, Yehudi Menuhin and Pandit Ravi Shankar among others as its trustees—the SRA attempts to bring back the ancient mode of training, where pupils not only lived with their *gurus* but also learnt under their direct supervision. For this purpose the academy engaged acknowledged and learned masters like Ustad Nisar Hussain Khan (Saiswan *Gharana*) Girija Devi (Benaras *Gharana*) Ustad Latafat Hussain Khan (Agra *Gharana*) and Nivritibua Saranik (Jaipur *Gharana*) among others. A couple of promising and gifted students, chosen from all over the country after stringent qualifying tests, are attached to each master. Each student is given a scholarship for around 10 years so that they can continue their training without any economic hardship.

Rashid Khan (18) is one such product of the SRA. The son of a small town tailor in Uttar Pradesh, Rashid's world would have been made up entirely of thimbles, needles, sewing machines and thread. But his intense love for music had changed his mundane existence suddenly, when the SRA talent searchers found him. Today, after nearly six years of training at the feet of Ustad Nisar Hussain Khan, Rashid has carved out a niche for himself in the world of classical music singers. Thanks to SRA, he can pursue his first love with no worries at all.

There is a second group of scholarship holders. They are young and promising performing artistes who are not under a *guru* but are selected to develop their talent under the guidance of the SRA's expert committee, again made up of well known musicians. There is also a third group of trainees who do not live on the premises. These students receive free facilities of daily training at the SRA under the guidance of A. Kanan.

But music, according to Vijay Kichlu, cannot be learnt by "learning music alone." A student has to learn to speak correctly. *Uchcharan* or pronunciation is of utmost importance to good music. It is for this reason that the SRA also holds language and general deportment classes. And for their progress in music, each scholar is evaluated by experts every three months. Each student gives a recital and it is then criticised by the members of the committee. Helpful suggestions follow the criticism.

How far has the SRA been successful in its single minded devotion to improving classical music? "I am proud to say that my scholars are great," said Vijay Kichlu, "we have



Vijay Kichlu, director of the SRA unique effort

many shortcomings but I have achieved a lot." Living examples of his words are young Ajay Chakravarty and Rashid Khan. Chakravarty joined the academy when he was 24 years old. Under the guidance of SRA's expert committee, who have polished every aspect of his singing, he has been able to flower into one of the finest young vocalists in the country. Chakravarty is predicted to fill up the vacuum left by Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali. Said Chakravarty, "Were it not for the SRA's expert committee, who I consider my *guru*, I would not have been where I am today. The criticism sessions with the masters have been more than worth while."

SRA's endeavour to put a lasting imprint on the pages of Indian classical music was crowned with success when it was chosen to be the sponsor and the principal organiser of Indian classical music programmes for the Festival of India in 1985 and 1986 in the USA. J. N. Sapr, chairman of ITC Limited said, "America is a very important place for us and the Festival of India a momentous event."

The SRA is fulfilling an important task—that of taking our music beyond our shores."

The programme in the USA has been broken up into three phases. The first one beginning this month and extending to early November '85 will have four large festivals at the University of Maryland, New York, San Francisco and Boston besides one day concerts at 20 different cities. Apart from eminent musicians, well known musicologists will also be lecturing and conducting special workshops in an effort to bring about an understanding and appreciation of the rich and varied music of India to Americans. In the second phase beginning in March 1986, SRA will present six prodigies of India: three from Hindustani classical

music and three from the Carnatic system. In the last phase beginning in September '86, a number of veteran musicians will be on show.

Looking back on his achievements, Vijay Kichlu said, "My coverage is only a drop in the ocean. Producing two or four musicians of a high calibre is not enough. One of his biggest handicaps is that the SRA in its short life of seven years has been able to deal with only Hindustani vocal music and that touched upon only a few *gharanas*. But what is commendable is that Kichlu's brainchild has been able to produce musicians of the calibre of Ajay Chakravarty and Rashid Khan. But for Kichlu there is greater pleasure from the fact that the children who have been born in the SRA's total music environment are budding into fine artistes themselves. One such is Ajay Chakravarty's five year old pretty daughter Kaushiki Chakravarty. Perhaps Kichlu had her uppermost in his mind when he optimistically said, "If out of every 50 children we have, we can produce one Ajay Chakravarty and one Rashid, we will have fulfilled our purpose."

While ITC's contribution to the SRA is invaluable in terms of finances and infrastructure, it has been standing alone. Vijay Kichlu, along with other classical music maestros, is of the opinion that more organisations like ITC should come forward and lend a helping hand to a dream like the SRA. They have a point because there are a large number of sponsors for sports but the standard of our sportsmen have not improved. Why do private or even public sector organisations take it upon themselves to help the growth of the fine arts? Perhaps, it is for this reason that ITC's venture needs to be commended.

Tirthankar Ghosh, Calcutta



Sharma: scores again

Feelings on the Santoor

For classical music fans, Shivkumar Sharma's *Feelings* should make delightful listening. This album released by HMV is a blend of folk and light classical music, similar to the record he made several years ago named *Call of the Valley*. Sharma who has mastered the *santoor*, needs no introduction he has already established for himself a name in the film industry. He scored the music for *Silsila*, which was awarded the platinum disc and more recently *Faasle* fetched a gold

Heartening Feat

6 June 1985. It was a "historic moment" for the doctors of Tampa General Hospital, Florida, USA. In what was believed to be Tampa's first heart transplant surgery, Tom Thrasher, a 42-year old businessman from Tampa, was given a fresh lease of life. The credit for this unique achievement goes to Dr Raghavendra Vijayanagar (44) and Dr Michael Sweeney. But that was not all. About a fortnight later, Dr Vijay along with two other heart surgeons—Dr Paul Eckstein and Dr Michael Sweeney—saved the life of Glen F "Frank" Spurlin in an operation that lasted three-and-a-half hours. Dr Vijay left India in 1964 to specialise in coronary bypass and surgery.

Peddalling for Humanity

Shock, sympathy, and denunciation of Union Carbide's callousness were the most common reactions of people to the Bhopal gas tragedy, the world over. While 'ambulance chasers' descended on Bhopal, few have made genuine gestures of condolence for the hapless victims. David Bergman (29) and Jonathan Evans (24) have, however, in a rare gesture of benevolence, decided to rough it out all the way from Birmingham, across two continents, to Bhopal.

The two English students who set out for their des-

tination on their bicycles on 5 August, hope to raise at least £ 60,000 for the Bhopal gas victims. They will pass through Belgium, West Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan en route to Bhopal with their kitty. Besides, Evans and Bergman will also make another contribution, this time to the field of science: they will take blood samples from each other and send these back to Birmingham to ascertain the changes that take place in enzymes when the body is exposed to prolonged exercise at high altitudes.

Dancing to Glory

They had never seen anything like it before: the costumes, the dances, the sheer romanticism of the themes. It was in New York at the on-going Festival of India that the dancing couple Raja and Radha Reddy gave the Americans a taste of Indian tradition and culture. The couple have depicted scenes from the *Bhagvad Gita* and the *Mahabhar-*

ata. Another item, *Tarangam*, was done by the husband-and-wife duo along with Raja's sister-in-law, Kaushalya. Married when they were children, Radha was influenced by Raja's keen desire to be a dancer. While Radha trained with Raja, her husband learnt the Kuchipudi from Guru Vedantham Prahlada Sharma. Later in 1966 the couple moved over to Delhi and from there it was a straight road to fame.

Radha and Raja Reddy: doing famously



Paul: good business

Paul's Share of Honour

Guess in which corridors the London-based businessman, Swraj (takeover) Paul, was loitering during his recent visit to Delhi? No, he was not making inroads into the stone monolith called the Reserve Bank of India nor visiting any of his minister friends. He was inside the country's premier news agency Press Trust of India (PTI), giving rise to speculation that he was going in for another takeover.

Swraj Paul was recently awarded the UN Council for Youth Award by President Zail Singh, for uplifting Indian industry as a non-resident Indian. He laughed at the words inscribed on the award: "Shri Paul with his business ethics has opened up a new chapter of industrial revolution." Did he leave his multimillion pound abode in London only to receive the award? "I don't have the money, I could not afford to come from London for this." And about the court case over the Escorts shares, he was quick with his repartee: "I am a simple onlooker in the episode. Escorts is fighting the RBI and the Life Insurance Company. I am a silent sufferer."

Meanwhile, Paul's 'ethical' enterprises continue: he has Rs 700 crores tied up in the Shahjahanpur fertiliser plant in UP.

Fuel of the Future

In his *Mysterious Island*, Jules Verne writes that water will one day be used as a fuel. That prediction may indeed come true in the late 1990s or early next century. Scientists grappling with more futuristic energy sources now believe that the lynchpin of future energy economy will be hydrogen, one of the constituents of water. They say that in future fuel will be relatively cheap, abundant and non polluting because when hydrogen is burned as a fuel, the residue is water vapour. And gram for gram, hydrogen has three times more energy than gasoline and it is as safe to handle as gasoline or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Unlike electricity it can also be stored for later use.

Yet, how is it that hydrogen has been taking a back seat all these days? One reason is that electricity came sooner. Moreover, the potential of hydrogen as a fuel had not been assessed until recently. Its chances further receded when oil was found in the 1880s. The internal combustion engines were designed to exploit the energy content of gasoline and diesel that were more easily available than hydrogen. Secondly, although hydrogen is present in water, there was until recently no cheap and efficient way of extracting it. As a fuel for transportation, hydrogen's potential was recognised even before the Second World War. But hydrogen cars did not enter the market as the memory of *Hindenburg* (the hydrogen filled airship that exploded in air in the 1930s) was still fresh in the

minds of the people and no one knew how to store hydrogen inside a car. But in the last 15 years many of the problems have been overcome and hydrogen seems poised to enter the energy scene in a big way in the next decade.

In a very real sense, even now, the world is powered predominantly by hydrogen. For over two decades, liquid hydrogen has been the source of power for space rockets. Natural gas, which is commonly used in industries and homes, consists of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms. The gasoline molecule is a cluster of six carbon atoms linked to 16 hydrogen atoms. It is the large hydrogen component that gives these fuels the energy content. This energy will be even more if the fuel used is pure hydrogen.

The major thrust today is on replacing gasoline and other petroleum based fuels with hydrogen in transportation vehicles—cars, scooters, ships and trains. Because it is lighter and has more energy than fuel, a strong case has been made for hydrogen fuelled aircraft.

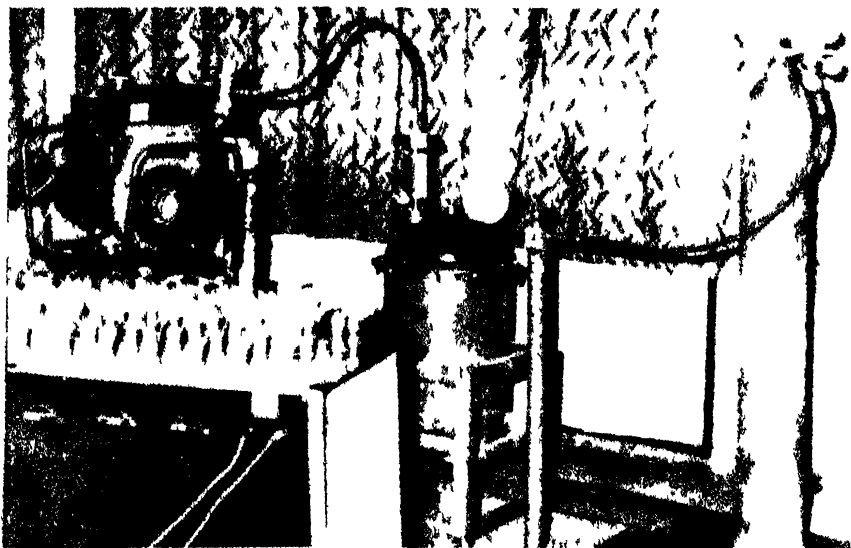
It was in 1969 when an engineer of the Oklahoma State University, USA, demonstrated that a converted internal combustion engine could run more efficiently on hydrogen. Engineers at the Melbourne University in Australia found that hydrogen fuelled spark ignition engines saved more fuel, compared to electric engines, in cars running on batteries. Today, Japan, USA, USSR,

West Germany and Australia are in the race to introduce hydrogen as fuel for transportation. In the USSR, several Moskvich and Volga cars have been modified to store hydrogen.

The Musashi Institute of Technology in Japan converted a Datsun car so that it could run on liquid hydrogen fuel for 2,800 kilometres without maintenance. In the next five years, Japan is likely to introduce cars as well as scooters fuelled by hydrogen. Recently, the Suzuki Motor Company developed a liquid hydrogen fuelled mini car that has 23 per cent more power than its gasoline counterpart.

"For technical and economic considerations, hydrogen seems to be the most suitable candidate to substitute gasoline," says Dr H B Mathur, professor of chemical engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in New Delhi. Mathur is the first Indian engineer to have converted a petrol engine into a hydrogen engine. "We have run it for 600 hours without any trouble," he said. One modification was the replacement of the conventional carburettor with an injection system. "A US firm asked Rs 500,000 for an injection system. So we designed and built the system on our own at negligible cost," he said. Mathur, who had earlier modified scooter and auto engines for operation with alcohol, believes that hydrogen is the best of all fuels including gasoline, from the point of fuel economy, pollution and engine efficiency. The only problem is that the engine cylinder must be kept scrupulously clean.

The prospects of the hydrogen car have brightened with breakthroughs in the development of storage systems. Hydrogen, which is normally a gas, can be stored in steel cylinders but these are too bulky and heavy. The alternative is to reduce the volume of the fuel by converting the gas into liquid form. Since liquid hydrogen boils easily it has to be kept in some sort of a "thermos flask" and cooled to about 250° C below zero. In the USA, liquid hydrogen tanks that are collision proof have been built for cars. West Germany, too, has carried out extensive trials on storage vessels for liquid hydrogen as well as refuelling systems in cars. Japan is specialising on a different type of storage system called "metallic hydride." This sys-



The conventional generator set (left) modified to run on hydrogen stored in a cylinder

tem consists of a compound or alloy of certain metals (like tantalum, nickel and tellurium) which absorbs hydrogen gas like a sponge and gives it out on slight heating. The heat in the auto-exhaust is enough to drive the hydrogen, stored in the metal hydrides, to the engine. Metal hydride systems for cars as well as stationary engines have been built by Billing Energy Corporation USA, Daimler Benz of West Germany and by CEN Corporation in France.

The storage capacity of the metal hydride system has been further improved instead of using it in bulk, a thin film of the material is now being used. Japanese companies have already standardised the metal hydride packages for scooters and cars. A single block of metal hydride placed around the foot pedal of a scooter will have enough stored hydrogen for a 200 km ride. The metal hydride system is being closely guarded by Japan which refused to sell even a few kilograms of the material to Mathur for his project. Anticipating such hurdles, the department of non conventional energy sources has funded a Rs four million project at the Benares Hindu University for development of metal hydrides. Mathur asserts that his hydrogen test vehicles would use the Indian made storage system expected to be ready in six months. The metal hydride system is three times as heavy as the gasoline tank used in cars today but is preferred to the liquid nitrogen system that suffers from cumbersome cooling arrangements.

Besides developing 'metal' hydride systems for cars, Japan's National Highways has made a conceptual design of a high speed train fuelled by liquid hydrogen. Hydrogen will power four 35 mw gas turbines that will pull the train.

Scientists also foresee a new era of air transport with liquid hydrogen fuelled commercial transport planes. "These will be in operation in the next decade," according to I V C Namboodry of the Indian Space Department, one of the 70 participants of a hydrogen energy workshop that was recently held in New Delhi. The biggest attraction to aircraft designers is the fact that hydrogen is lighter than jet fuel while having three times its energy content.

The switchover to hydrogen will depend on how soon cheap and efficient technologies to extract hydrogen from water will become available. Today, hydrogen is produced from coal, natural gas, steam reforming of naphtha or electrolysis—the age old process of extracting hydrogen by passing electric current

Put pieces of red hot charcoal in a closed vessel and heat them slowly with steam and air. The outcome is a gas rich in hydrogen and carbon monoxide. This is the producer gas that powered over a million vehicles during the oil-starved days of World War II. Gasifiers mounted on bumpers of big cars and buses were a familiar sight then but post war supplies of cheap oil quickly killed gasification.

Now gasifiers are staging a comeback. Scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in New Delhi have developed a gasifier that uses not just charcoal but briquettes called "paru" fuel made from agricultural and forest wastes. Prof H B Mathur and his team at IIT's mechanical engineering department have modified a 6 kw diesel generator set so that it could work on producer gas. The set has logged over 1000 hours and he is confident that in the near future, villagers can run their diesel generator sets with homegrown fuel instead of diesel.

According to Mathur, the conventional diesel generator can be made to work on 100 per cent producer gas by adding a spark plug and slightly modifying the engine. Instead of this, he opted for an alternative—that of running the engine on bifuel. This involved addition of a retrofit for induction of a proper mix of producer gas and air. A conventional diesel set with the retrofit works best with a mixture of 30 per cent diesel and 70 per cent producer gas. He says the country can save a huge quantity of diesel it

through water.

For a long time to come, electricity will be needed to produce hydrogen from water. According to many scientists, hydrogen is still preferable to electricity as the former can be stored and used when needed while electricity must be consumed when produced. Transmitting electricity by cables is also costly while hydrogen can be transported to consumers via tankers or through pipes.

Hydrogen can also be produced by thermally splitting water at high temperatures in nuclear reactors. According to one proposal, nuclear plants which are sited offshore could use the heat to generate hydrogen gas directly from sea water. The gas would be sent through pipe

lines to consumers and part of it stored in underground cavities for future use.

Scientists say that before long, solar and other non conventional energy will be used to split water to extract hydrogen. Japan has already made some advance in photochemical methods of hydrogen generation. Water mixed with a chemical is exposed to sunlight to isolate the hydrogen. The discovery of hydrogen producing algae and bacteria has inspired Indian researchers too. Scientists at the Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre in Madras have grown an entire colony of such organisms which they found off the Madras coast.

A Special Correspondent

Return of the Gasifier

all the 25 million agricultural pumpsets are operated on bifuel. IIT gasifiers will also provide 'portable' power for threshing and other agricultural operations.

Mathur's project is funded by the department of non conventional sources of energy. He has also designed a large scale gasifier as a community power source for street lighting and small industries. Jyoti Limited of Baroda has indigenously designed gasifiers by using wood chips. A village about 100 kilometres from Baroda is now powered entirely by biogas plants and Jyoti's gasifiers.

In the Philippines and Brazil gasifiers are being used on a much larger scale. The Philippines Gasifier Equipment Manufacturing Corporation produces gasifiers to power jeeps, pumps, fishing boats and wheelbarrow mounted farm equipment such as threshers and generators. In Brazil companies have begun manufacturing gasifiers to power tractors, trucks and pumps and some even supply charcoal to their customers. South Africa plans to use gasifiers to overcome oil embargo problems. The Chinese are gasifying rice husks, a technology the Italians mastered.

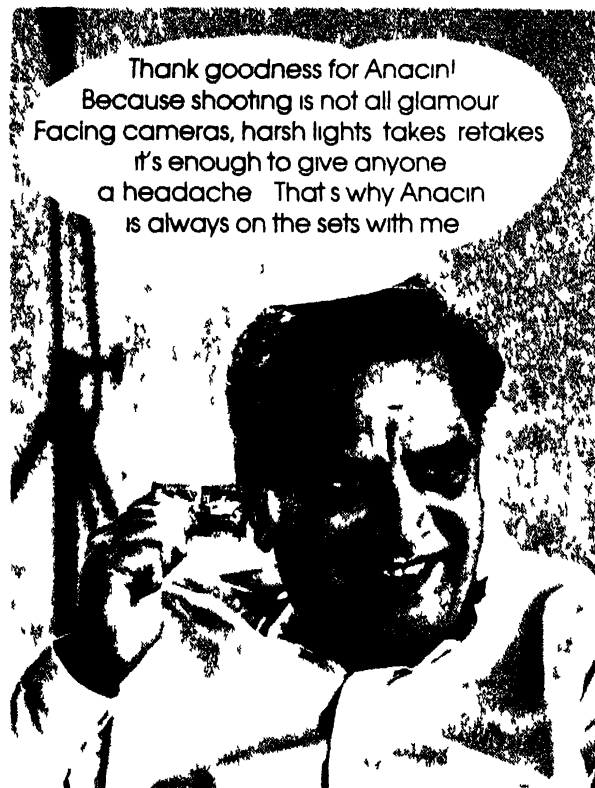
There are only two problems with gasifiers. If they catch on too rapidly, they could become a serious threat to forests. In the Philippines farmers using gasifiers are required to simultaneously plant fuelwood trees. Secondly, one of the gasifiers byproducts is toxic carbon monoxide. So farmers must be educated not to run gasifiers in closed rooms.

lines to consumers and part of it stored in underground cavities for future use.

Scientists say that before long, solar and other non conventional energy will be used to split water to extract hydrogen. Japan has already made some advance in photochemical methods of hydrogen generation. Water mixed with a chemical is exposed to sunlight to isolate the hydrogen. The discovery of hydrogen producing algae and bacteria has inspired Indian researchers too. Scientists at the Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre in Madras have grown an entire colony of such organisms which they found off the Madras coast.

A Special Correspondent

Headaches: The Anacin Solution



ANACIN

It's trusted, like your doctor's prescription

Anacin has more of the pain reliever that doctors the world over recommend. That is why Anacin is so effective for headaches. And for the aches and pains of colds and flu, toothache, backache and muscular pain.

In a protective foil pack.



* Licensed user of T.M. Geoffrey Manners & Co Ltd

GM DL 86

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY

Space: Homeground for Bacteria

The possibility that life on earth originated from outer space is supported by research by Dutch scientists which has shown that bacterial spores can survive the extreme cold, intense ultra violet radiation and high vacuum conditions of certain regions of space. Peter Weber and Prof. Mayo Greenberg at Lieden University's laboratory of astrophysics used a vacuum chamber cooled almost to the point of absolute zero by liquid helium to simulate the deep space environment in which *bacillus subtilis* spores were bombarded with intense ultra violet radiation from a microwave powered hydrogen discharge lamp. In contrast to previous belief, researchers found that the spores' resistance to ultra violet rays increased rather than decreased at very low temperatures. Although the Dutch scientists support the theory that spores travel between stars they do not confirm the claim of some scientists such as Sir Fred Hoyle that bacteria multiply in space. They say that this is impossible since the bacteria in space become "totally dehydrated because of high vacuum conditions."

A Magnetic Monitor

Guy's Hospital in London plan to install a body scanner so powerful that it can monitor minute chemical changes inside diseased cells virtually as they take place. The scanner utilizes a fundamental property of matter called nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) to track what is happening at the molecular level inside the body. Dr. Michael Moseley, professor of radiological sciences at Guy's Hospital, is confident that the research into chemical changes in cells will find applications in breast cancer, heart disease and senile dementia.

Tracking Down Weapons

Scientists from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico have developed a supersensitive X-ray camera to be carried by the space shuttle. *Military Space*, a Washington newsletter said the camera was meant to provide precise detection of nuclear weapons tests in the earth's atmosphere. The camera consists of 20 six-sided metal plates, each with more than 26,000 holes. Each hole acts as a pinhole camera.

Cotton: The Multipurpose Crop

Soviet scientists claim to have found over 1000 different uses for the wastes from cotton crops. Seventy per cent of raw cotton grown in the Soviet Union is harvested in Uzbekistan. The director of the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of Uzbek Academy of Sciences, Dr. Abid Sadykov, says his staff have extracted more than 100 organic compounds from cotton, leaves, stems, roots and seed pods. Organic acids contained in cotton can be widely applied in food, chemical, mining, textiles, medical and other industries. The scientists have produced a unique and cheap growth promoter from cotton leaf which can "increase crop yields." Cotton leaf compounds have also been added to fodder for pigs, sheep and cattle which has considerably increased their weight by 12 to 20 per cent. In industry, the researchers have found that the cotton leaf can be used as a plasticiser during the toughening of ferro-concrete components. They say that it not only improves quality but also reduces amount of concrete required.

Their jingles are on the lips of every kid who is a TV watcher. 'Happy days are here again' and 'Niky Tasha Kitchennette' are some of the favourites. But few can identify the voices behind them. Sandhya and Dinshaw Sanjana. The couple, who work on them for three to four days a month, claim that they do it merely for a 'liveliness'. Says Sandhya, "The money we earn takes us over the whole month which naturally means that we have so many days free to spend with the children. They have two children, Ambika and Vivan."

After *Khushi* is a portrayal of the elite and the focus on the lives of the middle class. In *Ados Pados* the new serial *Nukid* brings the common man into the limelight. Directed by Kundan Shah, the serial behind the popular *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi*, the programme shows life that is not in a particular location with special emphasis on its character—of a bleary weeper, beggar etc. Though Shah has already received the green signal from Doordarshan, the casting is yet to be finalised. But what is certain is that some of the faces of *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* will be cast in *Nukid*. Satish Shah is already being approached. Along with Saied Muzaffar, he is planning to launch another serial called *Police Station*.

The Small Screen

Doordarshan's sponsored programmes have come as a blessing for fresh TV producers. Until recently they would languish away in the hope of getting a telecast or two. Now, he it is that changed. New comers are suddenly in demand and they are preferred to established stars who find it difficult to fit in with their film date.

What happens when a simple, sensible and likable middle class lady from a small town like Bhadrabati is transplanted in a metropolitan and a polluted environment like Bombay. *Bante Bigadte*, the new TV serial telecast every Thursday at 10.20 pm, provides the answer. This programme sponsored by Godrej Soaps Ltd. and produced by Rakesh Chowdhury revolves around the pretentious lifestyle of the urban society. The serial introduced by Rekha Bhaduri as Dularibati who copes with a pipe-dreamer husband, Murari Ajit Vachhani, and inherits a vast fortune on condition that she can successfully manage a giant import-export firm.



M.S. Sathyu, the maker of *Sookhi*, helped by Doordarshan

Doordarshan has been flooded with requests from a number of filmmakers ever since Prakash Jha's *Duniya* and M.S. Sathyu's *Sookhi* were aired on the network. The producers of small budget films who are more or less settled have decided to pitch their projects with Doordarshan's decision to promote them. Doordarshan has also announced that it will telecast an art film once every first Sunday of a month.

Corruption is apparently gaining wide currency at Sansad Marg. Film producers have to bribe and bargain to get their rates. The ratio is 50:50 which means that if Doordarshan pays Rs two lakhs for a C-grade film, the producer gets only Rs one lakh, the rest is shared allegedly with Doordarshan. The story goes that a well-known Bengali producer who tried to release his films to Doordarshan found that they had been rejected. He then went through a middleman who knew the ropes. Result: within two months all his films were selected and some have even been released.

Speaking of BBC comedies, there is a terrific one being shown on the second channel on Wednesdays at 8 pm. A refreshing change from the predictable *Didi's*

Comedy which it replaced this serial *Goodbye Mr. Kent* series and in ending a ludicrous man who elbows his way to a widow's home as a paying guest and wins her heart as well. The first episode in which he arrived unannounced followed by his grand piano promised well for more hilarious sequences.



V.N. Gadgil is he the boss?

Will the real boss of Doordarshan at Sansad Marg please stand up? The information and broadcasting minister V.N. Gadgil, who paid a visit to Bombay recently, agreed to hike the rates for the telecast of the Sunday film and other programmes (such as *Chhaya Geet*) thus meeting a long standing demand of the producers. On his return to Delhi he found that his orders had been overruled. This led many to conclude that the man behind the scene was not Mr Gadgil but the information and broadcasting secretary S.S. Gill.



Rekha Bhaduri and Ajit Vachhani in *Bante Bigadte*

BEGINNING 8 SEPTEMBER 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This week you will come in contact with an influential person do not hesitate to seek favours. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. The domestic front will remain inspiring. A short trip is in the offing. Despite losses on the financial front businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. A pleasant surprise awaits you at the weekend.
Good dates 9, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 7
Favourable direction South-east



LEO (15 August—14 September) The week ahead is particularly favourable for those in love and intending to get married. The domestic front will remain inspiring and your children will come out with flying colours in competitions. Businessmen and professionals will also find this period fruitful. Friend may need you for emotional support. However do not lend money. Avoid journeys.
Good dates 9, 10 and 12
Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction South-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) A hectic week lies ahead of you do not waste time on socialising but push your efforts to the utmost. Professionals will be rewarded for their sincerity. Lovers may go ahead with marriage plans. Do not hesitate to take the help of your elders who will prove to be very helpful. On the financial front gains through unexpected sources are in store.
Good dates 8, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction North-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is a good period for lovers. A letter from a long lost friend will give you a lot of pleasure. Social engagements will keep you busy but do not neglect official duties. There are chances that professionals will come in for severe criticism from their employers. Businessmen should deal with their customers carefully. Jobs are in the offing for those unemployed.
Good dates 8, 10 and 12
Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 8
Favourable direction North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Financially this is a bright phase and you may gain money from an unexpected source. An old friend will prove to be particularly helpful. Your health will improve. However the week ahead is not lucky. Lovers postpone marriage plans. Reconcile with someone close to you may be required. A letter towards the weekend will bring good tidings.
Good dates 10, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction North-east



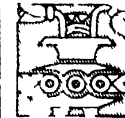
CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) The period is favourable for love and matrimonial negotiations. Artists and writers will prosper during this phase. The domestic and financial front will not cause concern. Your health will improve markedly. If you have legal problem this is the ideal time to solve them. Professionals should desist from taking hasty decisions regarding their career.
Good dates 11, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers 1, 8 and 9
Favourable direction South



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The stars shine brightly on all your efforts this week. Professionals will win the praise of their employers while businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business. Writers and poets will be rewarded. The domestic and financial fronts will not cause any problems. Lovers and academicians will also find this phase favourable. Guard your health closely.
Good dates 10, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers 6, 7 and 9
Favourable direction West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) A favourable week for romance. Domestic problems will bother you this week but do not neglect your work. There are chances that you may incur the wrath of your superior. Social engagement will keep you occupied and you will have to spend a lot of money. Businessmen should devote more time to their business.
Good dates 11, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction West



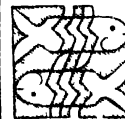
AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Professionals should avoid arguments with their colleagues. Those in business should be wary of deception. Students should devote more time to studies. Your financial prospects look bright. At home you will be called upon to shoulder more responsibilities. A pleasure trip is in the offing.
Good dates 9, 10 and 13
Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is the ideal time to solve legal problems. Friends will prove to be very helpful. Businessmen will find this phase favourable. However professionals should be careful while dealing with their superiors. On the financial front you may run into rough weather. This is not a good week for those in love postpone marriage plans. A journey is in the offing.
Good dates 8, 9 and 11
Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 5
Favourable direction North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A major event in your life is likely to take place during this week. Those of you who are or the look out for life partners will be successful in finding them. Professionally this will be a lucky period for you. However exercise tact and caution while dealing with your colleagues. Someone close to you may suddenly fall sick. Avoid spicy food.
Good dates 9, 12 and 13
Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Be prepared for setbacks on all fronts. Politicians and lawyers should stay away from controversies. Businessmen should check documents meticulously before signing them. Professionals are advised not to neglect their work. On the financial front heavy losses are indicated. You may have to borrow money to tide over this lean period.
Good dates 10, 11 and 14
Lucky numbers 1, 5 and 7
Favourable direction West

For those born between 15 September and 14 October

You are very observant and every little thing happening around you is registered in your memory. In business particularly your power of observation comes in good use. Your love of orderliness and punctuality is noteworthy. You are good in commercial subjects. People born during this period make very able administrators. However you tend to criticise persons unnecessarily, overlooking their good points. Very often, you are a victim of depression. Sometimes your temper gets out of hand though usually you are mild natured. Women born under this sign suffer from an exaggerated fear of illness.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



MADRAS: Recently at the RMS sorting office at Coimbatore there arrived a letter that caused a flutter. It was an envelope from Bombay on its way to Coonoor with the words "letter bomb" inscribed on it. The RMS sorter who noticed the warning was more than prompt in informing his superiors. They hurriedly informed the railway police who, filled with trepidation took it to an isolated place. They put the envelope atop a chair in the railway station and waited for the explosives experts to arrive from Madras. The experts arrived and after careful scrutiny announced they did not find anything explosive inside the envelopes. Then the envelope wound its way to the address in Coonoor. It had been addressed to a girl. When the police reached the addressee, the girl burst out laughing saying that it was the usual prank played by her boy friend in Bombay! It is all very well to have boy friends with mischievous bent of mind, but this...?—*Indian Express* (Srinivasan Vasudevan, Madras)

HYDERABAD: A group of harijans handed over 43 gold coins weighing over 123 grams to the Andhra Pradesh chief minister, N.T. Rama Rao, which they found at Ramapuram village in Khammam district recently. The harijans, mainly coolies, found the treasure while they were filling mud into lorries, an official spokesman said. The delighted lot initially shared the treasure amongst themselves but on the advice of village elders, decided to surrender it to the chief minister — *Deccan Chronicle* (Khaja Karimuddin, Hyderabad)

BHOPAL: No state-level official function was held here on Independence day. Though Governor K.M. Chandy and chief minister Motilal Vora were present in the state capital, no official function was held to unfurl the tricolour nor was the ceremonial parade held for the Governor or the chief minister to take the salute. No official explanation was given for this lapse. In fact, no senior official or old residents here remember when the last flag hoisting ceremony was held here on Independence day. The All India Radio (AIR) authorities in Delhi reacted with disbelief when an AIR Bhopal correspondent did not mention Independence-day functions in his despatch filed recently—*The Hindustan Times* (O.P. Bajaj, Jabalpur)

BOMBAY: Dr Rajinder Singh in Simla is a dentist with a difference. He is also the world's fastest typist—with a speed of 483 strokes per minute and 99.97 per cent accuracy. Mr S.P. Godrej introducing the champion to the press said Dr Singh had won the world's fastest typist title at Bulgaria recently. The competition was organised by the International Federation of Stenography and Typewriting. Typists from 23 countries participated with their modern machines. Dr Singh achieved the distinction by using an Indian typewriter, he added—*Deccan Evening Herald* (P. Mohanraj, Bangalore)

NEW DELHI: Defence minister P.V. Narasimha Rao recently arrived at the India International Centre here to inaugurate a seminar exactly on the scheduled time (9 am) but found neither any organiser nor any participant. He walked into the auditorium, where he was to inaugurate the seminar organised by the Institute for Science, Culture and Development, and found it completely empty. Only a few journalists and Doordarshan cameramen were present. The minister waited for a few minutes and left. The first participant started arriving only after 9.30 am, more than half an hour after the scheduled time—*Indian Express* (B. Meenakshi Sundaram, Trichy)

HYDERABAD: A majority of beggars in Hyderabad and Vijayawada are "politically more conscious" than the average Indian and around 62 per cent have voted in several elections, according to a recent survey. This is because the beggars move from place to place and meet a wider cross-section of people, according to the survey, which was based on interviews with 200 beggars in Hyderabad—*The Times of India* (R.E. Salwan, 99 APO)

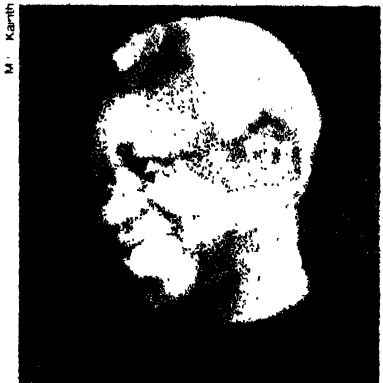
WITHOUT COMMENT

We seem to have forgotten that there is such a thing (as excellence). Everything is reduced to mediocrity, maybe even lower than that. This must be changed—Rajiv Gandhi, on the state of education, in *The Telegraph*

(Rajiv Gandhi) lives like a prisoner—H.N. Bahuguna in *The Statesman*

Has he (Rajiv Gandhi) got the power, the will and the ability to act? If he has not, India's entrance into the 21st century could prove to be far more than just 15 years—Editorial in *The Times* London

Baba Joginder Singh is a good fellow, surrounded by a handful of self-seekers—Sant Longowal, in an interview to *The Week* before his death



If we are not seeing the end of apartheid, we are seeing the beginning of the end —Julius Nyerere, Tanzanian President

I hate Flushing Meadows (where the US Open Tennis Championship is being held)—Wimbledon runner-up Kevin Curren, after being defeated in the first round by Guy Forget

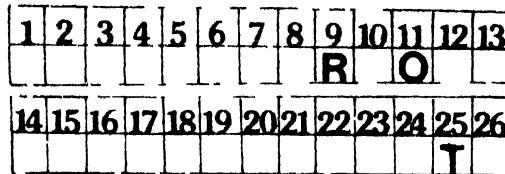
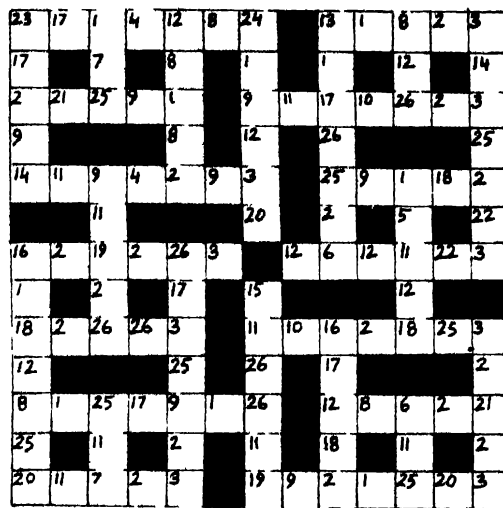
As first citizen I should have the nicest car (Standard 2000 Rover). It doesn't look good for a mayor to go in an ordinary car when other citizens drive past in better cars—Bombay mayor Chhagan Bhujbal in *Bombay*

There never was anything slight about me. Everything I did was in excess—Shammi Kapoor, on his heyday, in *The Telegraph* colour magazine

TEASERS

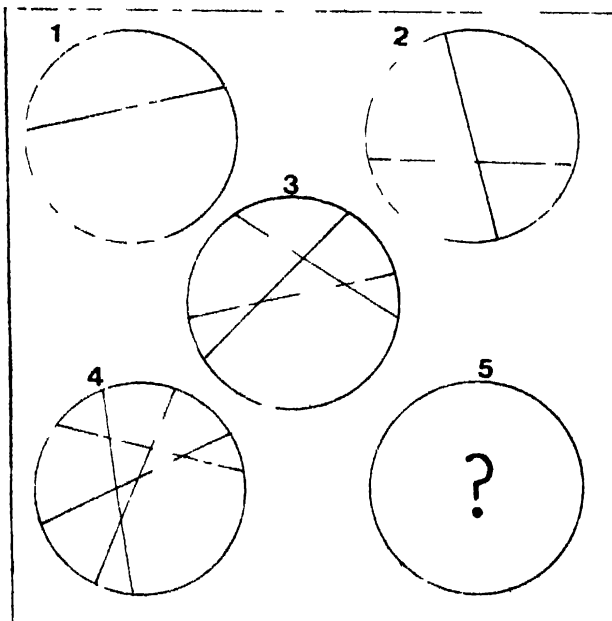
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



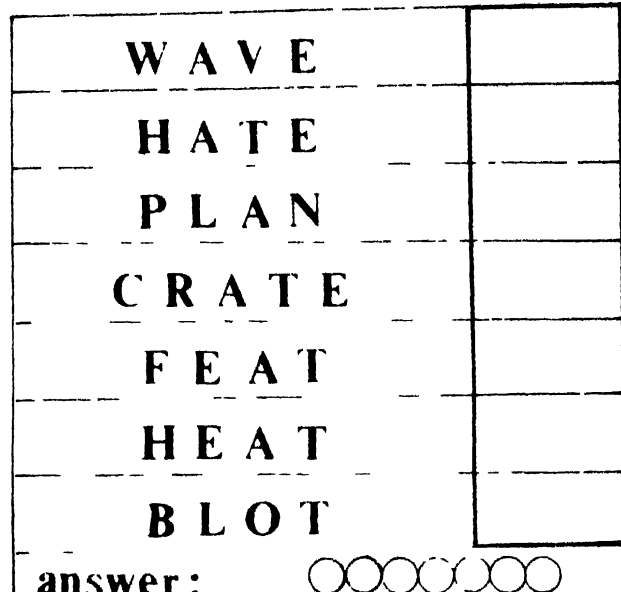
Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start, three letters are given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Shape Sleuth



You see here rounds of cheese cut into sections, using one cut, 2 cuts, 3 cuts and 4 cuts. What is the maximum number of sections you can obtain by using 5 cuts?

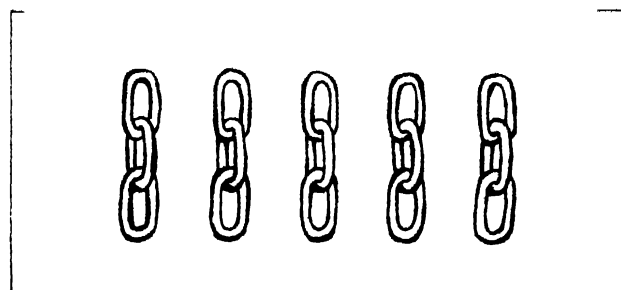
Word Power



Add a letter to each of the words so that they fit the clue. The 6 letters you have added can be rearranged to provide you with what you are tackling.

To use warp and weft
To make when in a hurry
Shade provider
To make
Occasion for revch
Vital organ
To swell

Witsharpener



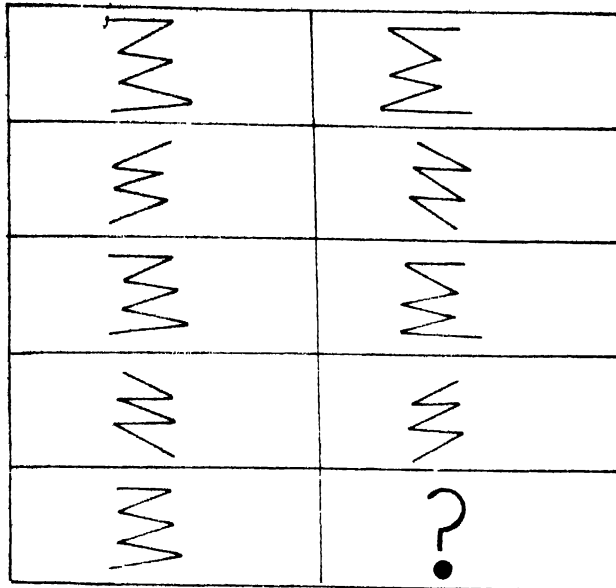
If a blacksmith charges 10 paise to break a link and 20 paise to weld it together again, what is the least amount you will have to pay to join the five pieces given above into a single length of chain?

Word Ladder

Can you go from SEA to BOTTOM, using hyphenated words, and the second part of each word serving as the stepping stone to the first part of the next one. For instance, if you wanted to go from SEA to COLLAR, you would do it thus: SEA DOG, DOG COLLAR.

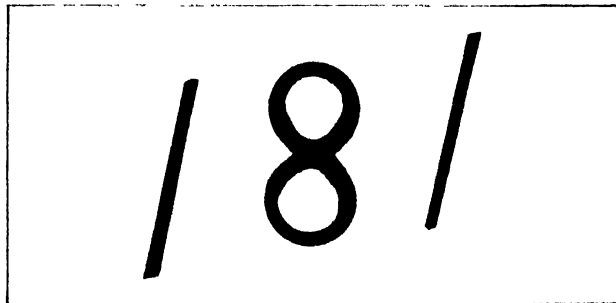
TEASERS

Look Again



Look at the zig zag figures given above and see if you can draw in the missing one.

Figure it Out



By adding two digits can you reduce the figure given above to a number less than 20?

Auntly Oddities

My aunt is an eccentric. She has any number of unreasonable likes and dislikes which don't seem to make much sense. For instance, she loves PASTRY but won't touch a TART. She claims to like FABRICS like SILK but will not tolerate a TEXTILE like COTTON. She loves SEWING but not EMBROIDERY. She adores MUSIC but will not allow a RADIO or GRAMOPHONE into the house. There are DACHSHUNDS and SIDNEY SILKIES all over but woe betide if a POMERANIAN or POODLE comes her way. She sits every evening on a SOFA but never on a CHAIR. And while she enjoys her SHERRY she will refuse a PORT. Likewise, she loves SAVOURIES but will not touch a NIMKI. She enjoys SANDWICHES but refuses to eat BREAD. Her literary tastes are no less strange. For example, she claims that she most likes reading SHAKESPEARE but promptly excludes half his plays such as THE MERCHANT OF VENICE and THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

As I said before, my aunt is a real eccentric. But can you say what makes her so?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

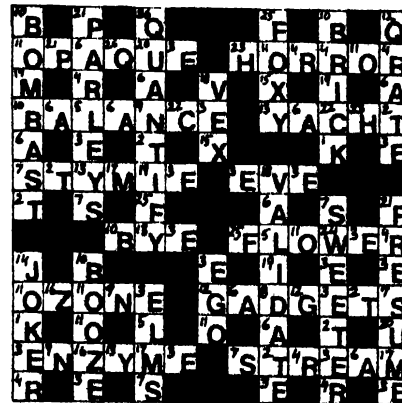
Quick Look: Piece no. 1

Word Power: IG. STIGMA, IGNORE, ENSIGN, BRIGADIER

Shape Sleuth: Illustration b. The part into which the front door fits.

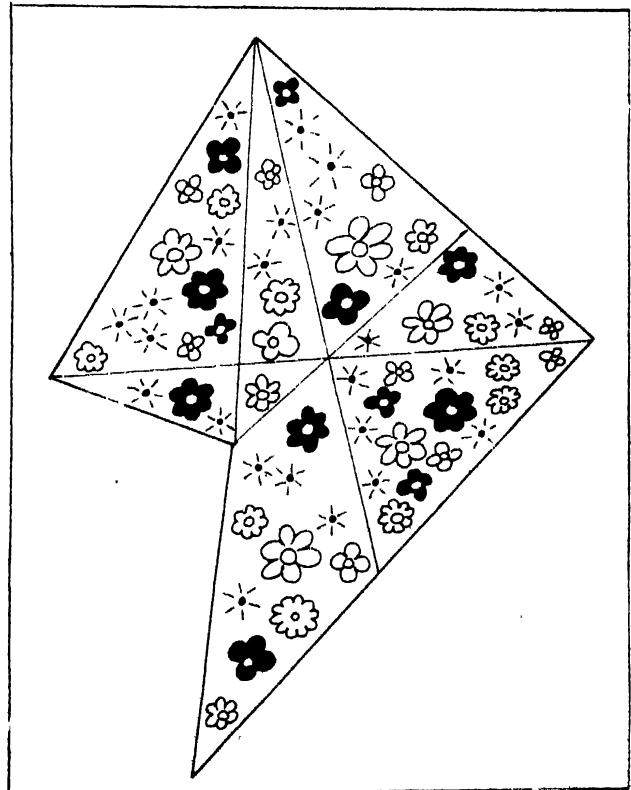
Quick Think: 20, 100. Add the highest and lowest numbers and multiply by 100.

Cryptocross:



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	T	E	R	L	A	S	D	N	B	O	G	Y
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
J	X	Z	M	V	I	U	P	C	H	W	F	Q

Figure it Out:



VARIETY

Chess

This week's game is an excellent illustration of the power of a pair of knights and also incidentally how the knights can be used to thwart the pretensions of the King's Indian Defence.

White: A Huss Bank A Martorelli King's Indian Defence. Black: 1-0.

1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 N-KB3 P-KN3
3 P-B4 B-N2 4 N-B3 Q-Q
5 P-K4 P-Q3 6 B-K2 P-K4
7 P-Q5 P-QR4 8 Q-Q

More frequently seen is 8 B-N5, many players being afraid to castle into the attack.

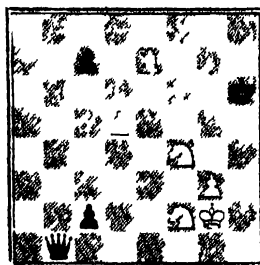
8 N-R3 9 B-K3 N-KN5
10 R-N5 P-KB3 11 B-R4 P-KR4?

Tempting but not good. A more sedate build up with 11 N-N2 or 11 N-B4 would be preferable.

12 N-K1 Q-K1 13 N-Q3 P-KN4
14 P-KR3

Leading to a perfect anti-King's Indian position.

Martorelli (Black)



Huss (White) to move

14 PxP 15 PxN PxP
16 BxP P-KB4 17 PxP BxP
18 BxR RxR 19 Q-N4 Q-B2
20 P-QR3

My personal preference would be for 20 N-K4 squashing even the slightest hint of counterplay.

20 R-KB1 21 P-QN4 PxP
22 PxP P-K5!

The only chance

23 NxP NkP 24 NxN R-B5
25 Q-K2 BxR 26 RxR Q-N3
27 R-K1 P-R6 28 P-N3 RxP!
Otherwise Black runs out of steam.

29 QxR RxQ 30 KxR K-N2
If 30 Q-B4+ 31 K-K3!

31 N-Q3 P-R7 32 K-N2 P-N4
33 N-B4 P-R8-Q 34 KxQ Q-R2-
35 K-N1

Stronger and more natural was 35 K-N2

35 PxP 36 NxQP Q-B7!
37 R-K7 K-B3 38 R-K6 K-N2
39 N-K4 P-B6 40 R-K7 K-R3
41 N-B2! Q-N8- 42 K-N2 P-B7

Black's counterplay appears to be sufficient, but the knights finally combine to pull off a beautiful finish.

Diagram

43 N-N4+ K-N4 44 R-K5 KxN
45 N-R3! Resigns

Matko's queen's unavoidable if 45 J-Bc 46 KxQ P-B8-Q- 47 K-N2
C-B7- 48 B2+

MICHAEL STEAN

Bridge



Some plays in bridge are admittedly baffling - so much so that even with all the cards exposed the winning play will not be apparent unless you have dwelt in those areas on a previous occasion. Suppose you arrive in Six Spades on the deal below, and a trump is led. How would you set about it?

Dealer South N-S vulnerable

♠ K Q
♥ A J 5
♦ 5 2
♣ A K 9 7 6 2
N
♠ 7 3
♥ Q 10 6
♦ Q 9 6 3
♣ Q 10 8 4
W
♠ 10 9 8 2
♥ 9 7 4 3
♦ K 10 -
♣ J 5
S
♠ - 6 5 4
♥ J 2
♦ A E 7
♣ 3

Nowadays players seem reluctant to

respond with a forcing bid. Here the bidding went

South	West	North	East
1♠	No	2♠	No
2♠	No	2♥	No
2NT	No	3♠	No
4♠	No	6♠	No
N	No		

West leads the 10 of spades and if you don't know this type of problem, the likelihood is that you will start on the

clubs, playing the ace and ruffing the second round. You play another spade to dummy and lead another low club, but this time you are overruffed. The clubs are established now, but you are a trick short, taking only four spades in hand (one has overruffed), four clubs and three red cards.

Now, again. Having won the spade lead in dummy, lead a low club at trick two. The defence can do nothing to overcome this exotic play. Say that East wins and returns a diamond. You win, draw a second trump and ruff a low club. Now you extract the remaining trumps and still have four club winners on the table.

This same type of ducking play may be right in theory if ever you hold A K Q x x x of a side suit opposite a singleton.

TERENCE REESE

Quiz

Questions

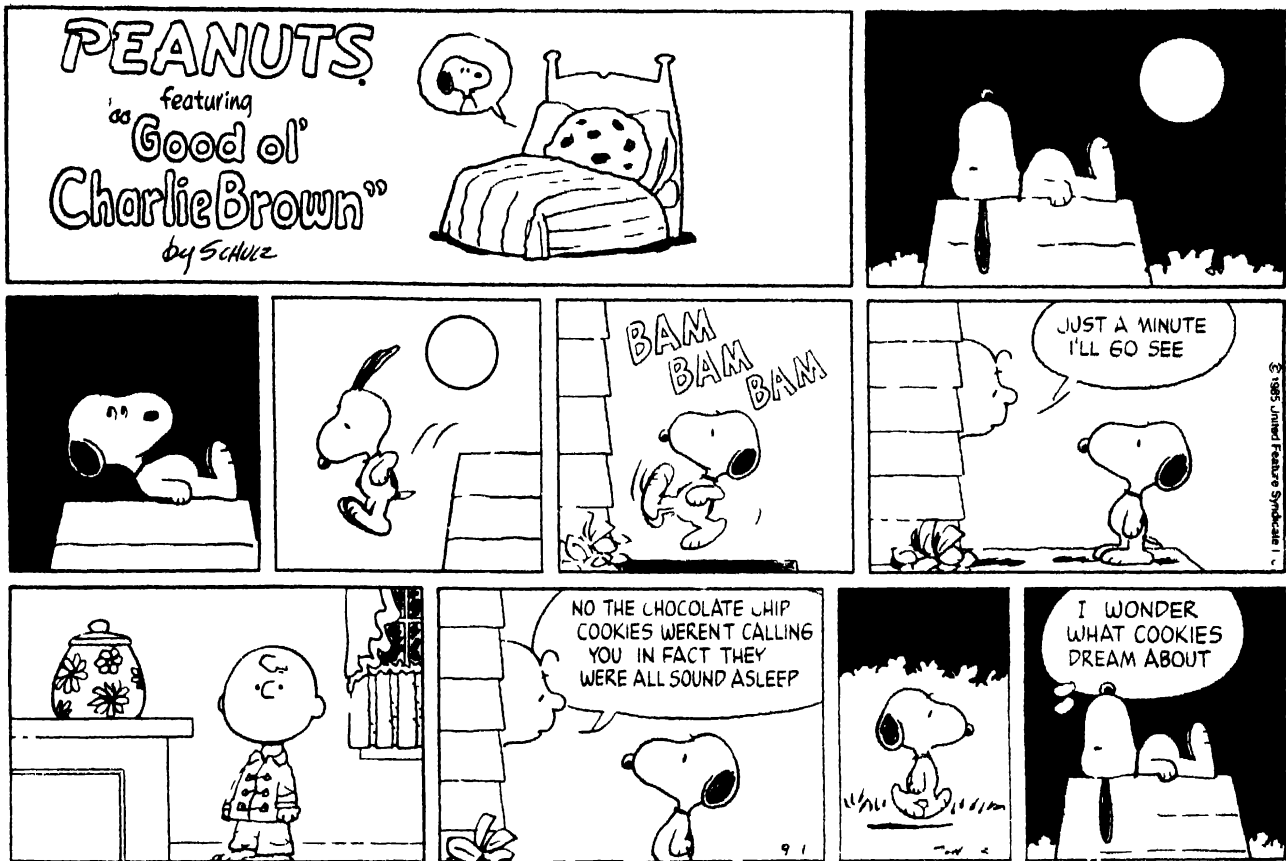
- What is smart money?
- The slogan of which airline is 'A great way to fly'?
- Who was known as the Scourge of God?
- Who fought the battle of Pharsalia?
- What are the grassy treeless plains in South America called?
- Name the tablet found in 1799 in an archaeological excavation which led to the deciphering of the pre-historic hieroglyphic script of the Egyptians?
- What does the term Pyrrhic victory mean?
- With which British governor-general is the partition of Bengal associated?

- Which building is called the Russian Acropolis?
- Who is a haliz?
- What is smaze?
- Lemurs, one of the most primitive members of the primate order of mammals, are found in only one island in the world. Which one?
- Lionel Lukin, William Wouldhave and Henry Greathead have been credited with which invention?
- Name the colourless gas which was previously obtained by heating the horns of hooves of deer and was known as hartshorn?

- Ammonia
- The life boat

- Money paid to a person to obtain exemption from doing something disagreeable
- Singapore Airlines
- Attilla the Hun
- Julius Caesar and Pompey
- The pampas
- The Rosetta stone
- A victory but at an excessively heavy cost
- Lord Curzon
- The Kremlin
- Someone who has learnt the Koran by heart
- A mixture of smoke and haze
- Madagascar

Answers



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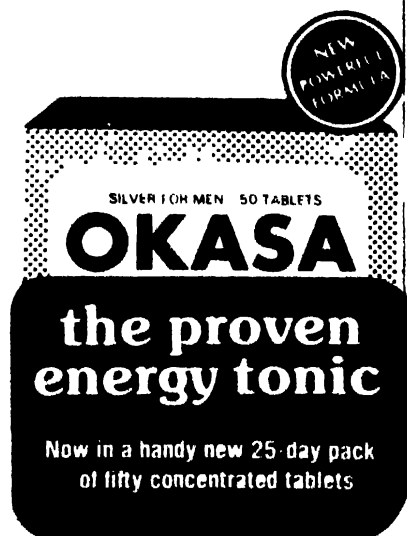
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Doon School Rule?

During the interviews for the selection of the Congress(I) candidates to contest the Punjab polls at the AICC(I) headquarters in New Delhi, one of the AICC(I) joint secretaries was cornered by some pressmen. After a lot of persuasion, he agreed to answer a few questions. Asked about the criteria which could be adopted to select candidates, the joint secretary came up with the usual answer: "Well, we are looking for people who are young, clean and interested in giving a new look to politics." To substantiate his answer he mentioned a few names. There was one who had attended all the social service camps in his area in the last five years. There was another who had donated blood the most often and yet another who had acquired a number of degrees in his name. Had anyone impressed him the most, the Congress(I) office-bearer was



Ticket-seekers for the Punjab polls squatting on the lawns of the AICC(I) headquarters in New Delhi

asked. "Well, yes," said the joint secretary with a smile on his face. "There is this girl, I mean, she is a young woman, who has come back with a degree from Washington. She did her schooling at Welham's." So, the Doon School network is essen-

tial for Punjab too, remarked someone. The joint secretary suddenly found himself in an embarrassing position. He must have discovered the reason: Welham's High School in Dehradun is believed to be the girls' counterpart of Doon School.

Chaudhary's Gandhism

The discerning visitor to the Lok Dal headquarters in Delhi will notice an interesting change. The lifesize portrait of Sardar

Vallabhbhai which used to adorn the walls right behind the Lok Dal president, Chaudhary Charan Singh's chair has

vanished. Its place had been taken by an even larger photograph of a smiling Mahatma. How had the Mahatma come

there? Sometime ago a foreign television team came to India to make a short film on the Chaudhary. But when the

team went to the Chaudhary's office, they did not quite approve of Sardar Vallabhbhai's picture. It was taken down immediately and replaced with Gandhiji's. Sardar Patel's picture, according to insiders in the Lok Dal office, lies neglected in one corner of the room.

The Pains of a University

The West Bengal minister for higher education, Shambhu Ghosh, was at pains to explain to the Delhi press why the move to declare Calcutta University an institution of national importance was "out-right political." He was in the capital, apparently, to mobilise opinion against the proposed "takeover" of the university by the centre. But the press remained unconvinced.

Among the members of the fourth estate were a couple of Bengali gentlemen who put forth passionate arguments to contest those of the West Bengal minister. One of them, a Calcutta University graduate, said: "I have re-

cently been to Calcutta University and was amazed to find that one of the window-panes in the main auditorium was broken. Is that not a sign of stagnation in Calcutta University?" He seemed to be saying that because the window-pane was broken, the takeover of the university was justified. But the West Bengal minister was enraged. Perhaps, he wanted to say, "How can you put forth such a sentimentalist argument?" But he did not say that. According to one of those present at the press conference, sentiments when fired by personal passions especially where Bengal is concerned, can lead to worse things.

The PM's Joyrides

Only a few days ago, the Prime Minister told a press conference that he had broken many conventions. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his impromptu snubs to his securitymen. Sometime ago, after paying his last respect to the late Air Chief Marshal with his wife, the Prime Minister discovered when he was leaving the Katre residence that a large number of security cars were following him. Irrked, he stopped his car. Naturally, the whole convoy halted. The Prime Minister then got out of his car in pouring rain and walking up to each security vehicle pulled out the keys from the ignition. Having put all

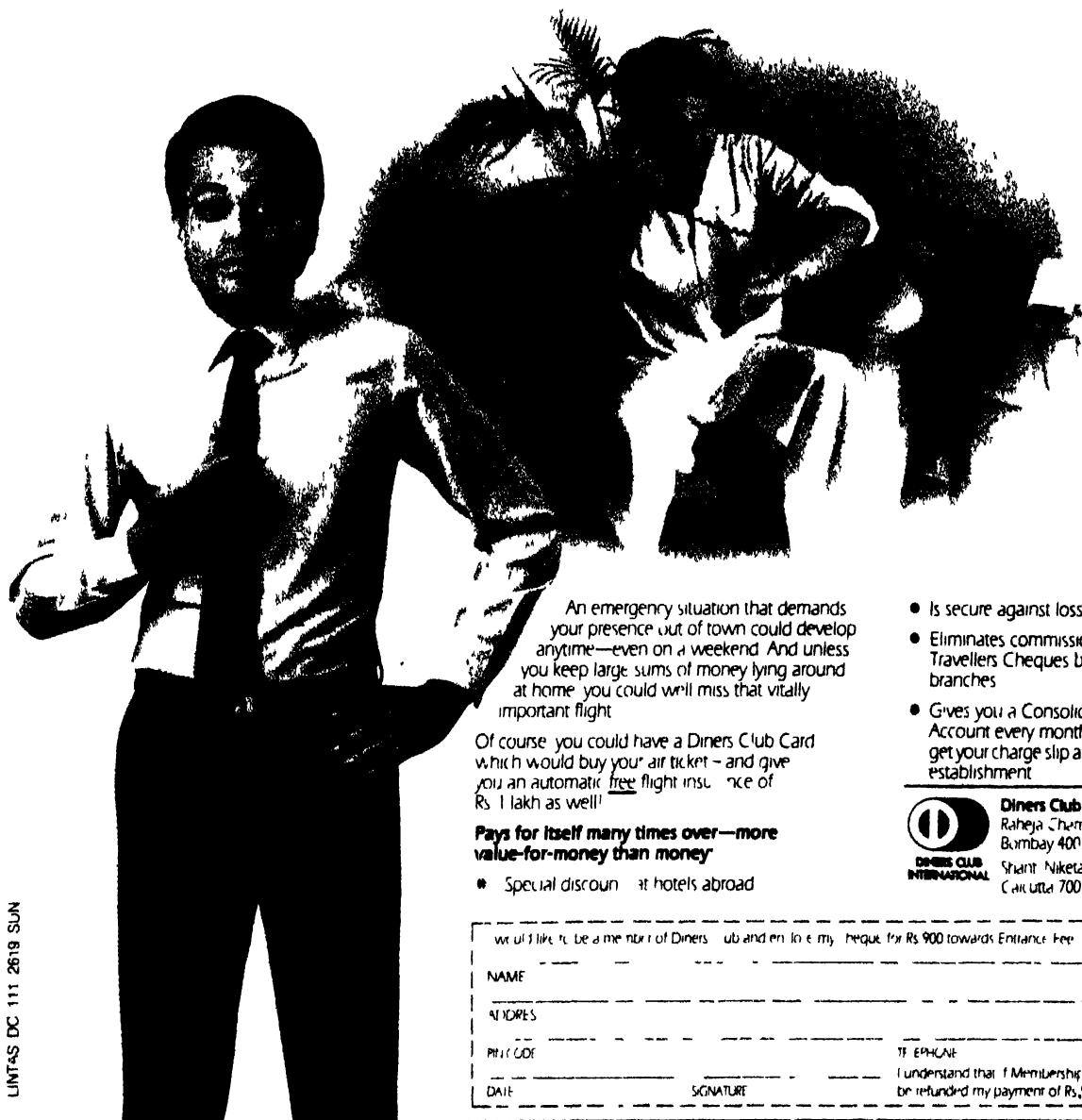
the keys in his pocket, Rajiv Gandhi went back to his car and drove away home. The security vehicles remained stranded in the rain till a car from the PM's house brought the keys back.

In another instance, some policemen found to their dismay a speeding vehicle crossing an intersection which has just been cleared for the Prime Minister's convoy scheduled to pass that way. When the policemen tried to look into the vehicle to identify the man behind the wheel, they found to their dismay that the driver was none other than the Prime Minister himself.

D.E. Nizamuddin



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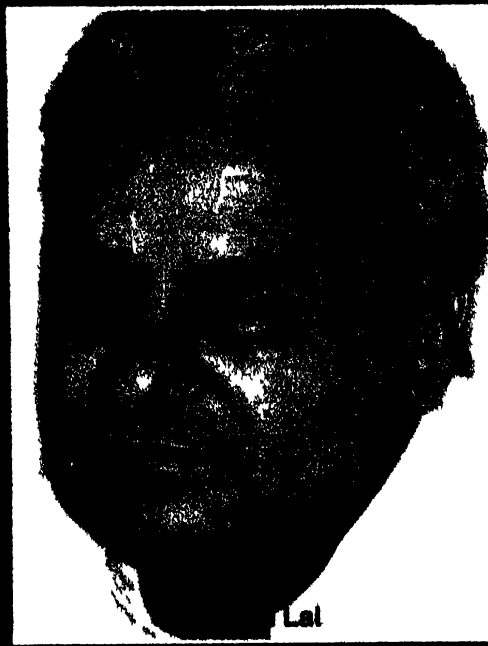
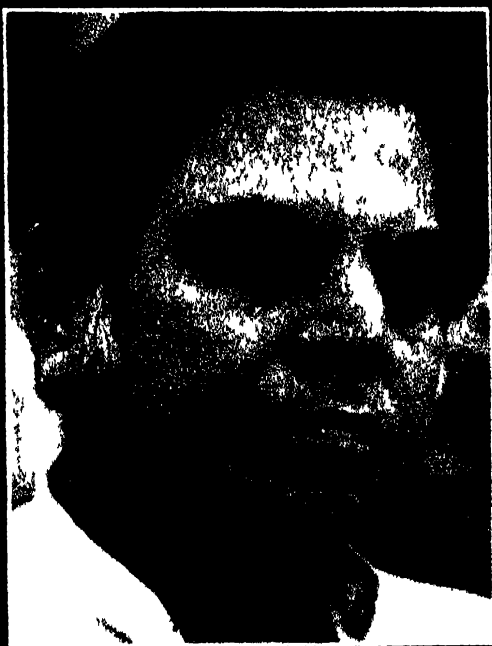


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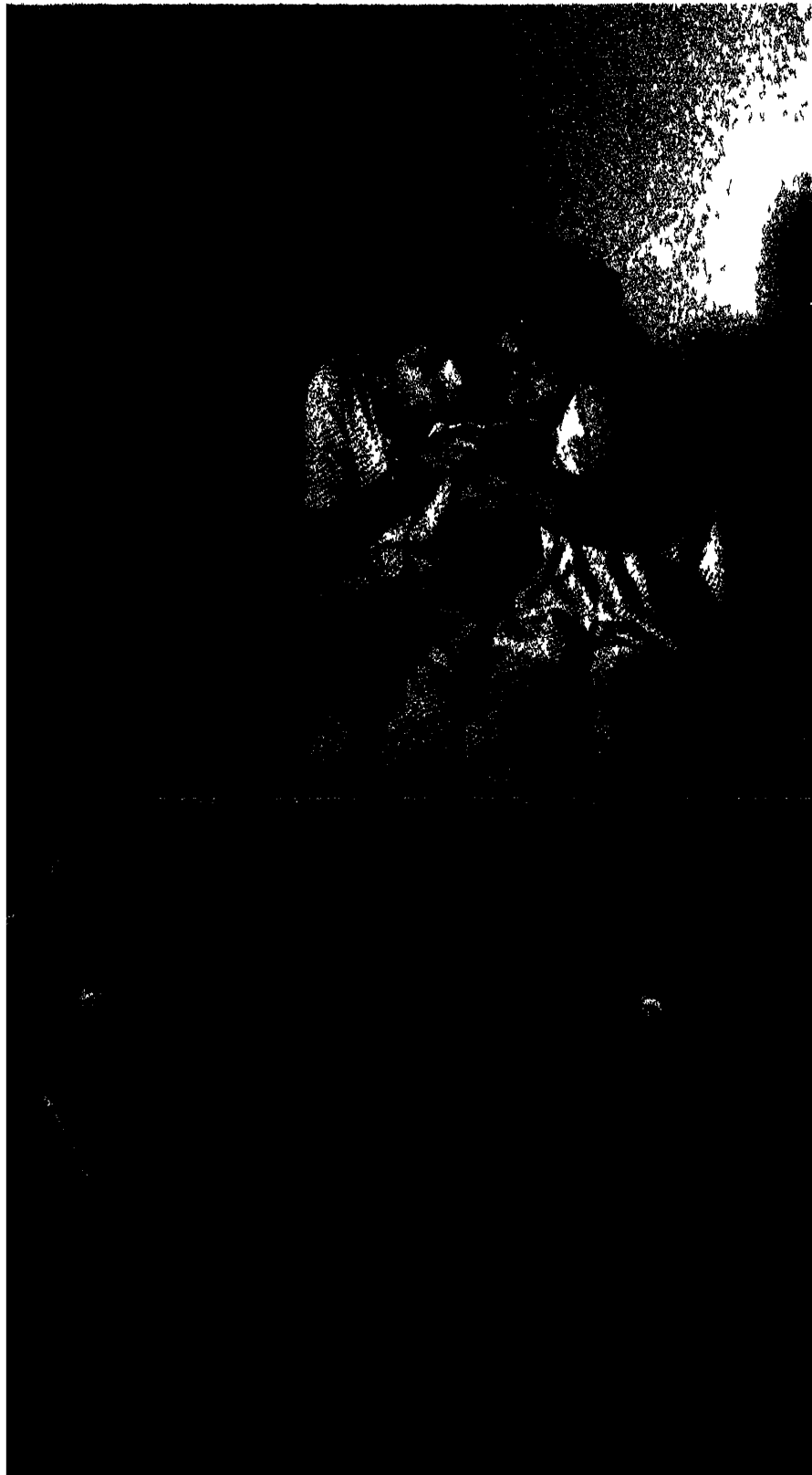
'Not Guilty'

...and ...



Interview with
Sri Lanka Tamil Leader
Chandrasahsan

They just found out.
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in the room.

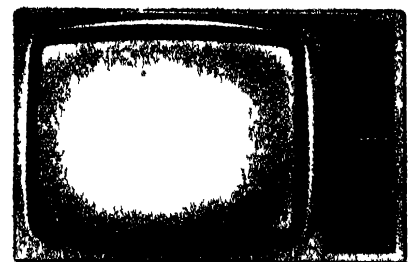


They settled down, cosily
snuggled up, to watch a
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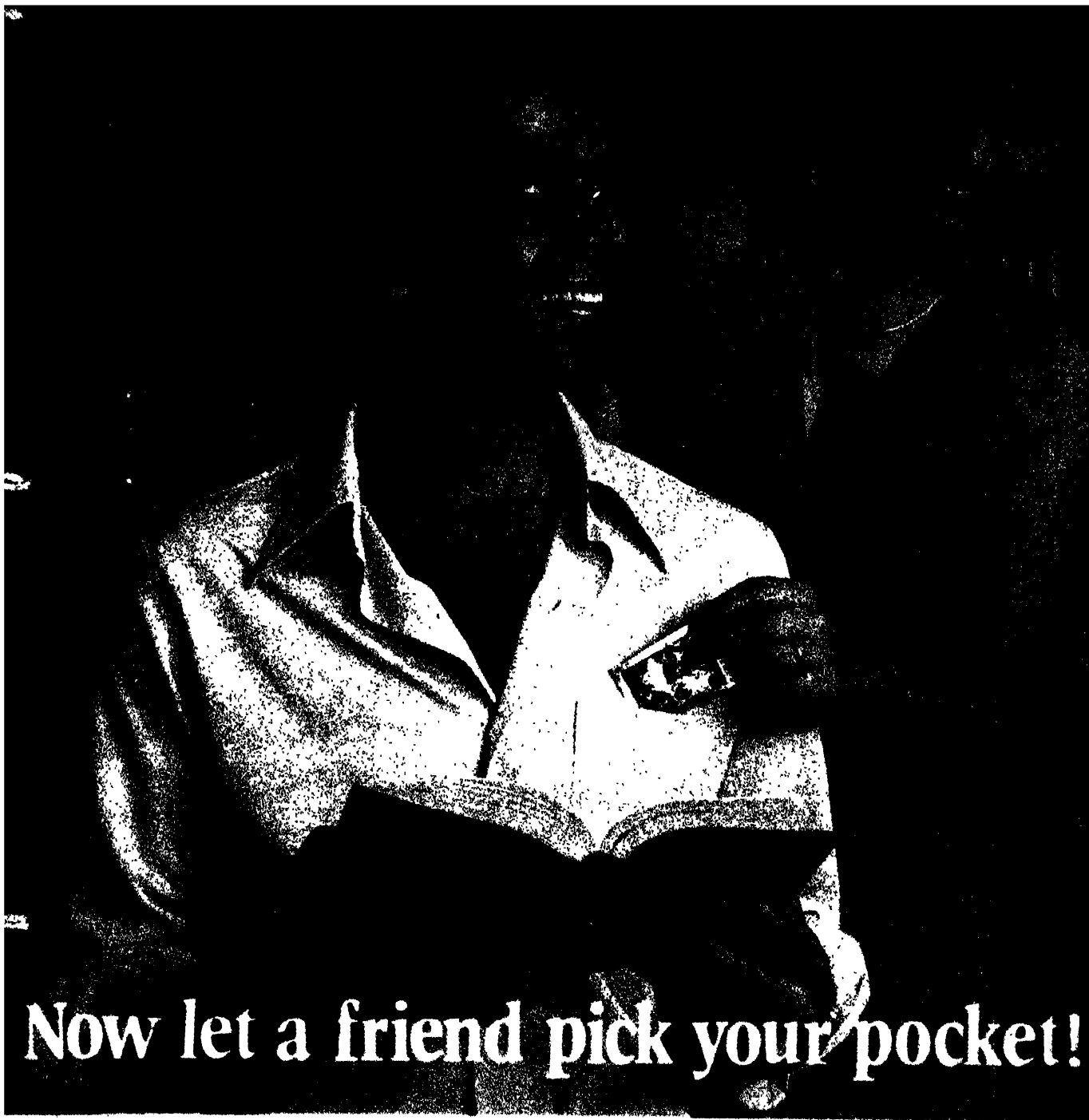
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Nikhil Chakravartty writes on politics and morality.

"I Owe Everything to the Congress"

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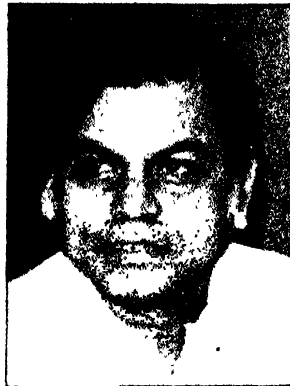
Will the Akalis be Allowed to Win?

Though the Congress(I) has put up weak candidates against the Akalis, the 25 September polls are not going to be a cake walk in view of the terrorists' threat, reports Rita Sharma.

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Tamil leader S.C. Chandrasekaran, on whom the deportation order was revoked, spoke to Anita Pratap.



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A Bloody Vendetta?

Barely a month after the brutal assassination of Lalit Maken and his wife, Arjun Das, Congress(I) councillor in New Delhi, was gunned down in his office. Was it an act to avenge the anti-Sikh riots of November? A report from Rashmi Saksena.

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"I once had leprosy but I was never a leper"

Today,
Ram Kumar has
no telltale signs

Ram Kumar is an able-bodied 11-year-old. He has no deformities. Nor has the stigma of leprosy left any psychological scars. "I owe it all to my parents," says Ram Kumar. "I was lucky."

Early detection

Four years ago, a doctor treating Ram Kumar for a cold noticed a pale patch on his back. Clinical investigation revealed leprosy. "I remember that evening very well," says Ram Kumar. "His eyes moistened, my mother cried and cried. And I remember my father's words of consolation: 'we'll fight it together,' he said. And we did."



The first thing Ram Kumar's father did was to learn everything he could about leprosy. The doctors told him that Ram Kumar's case—like four out of five leprosy cases in India—was not infectious. It would pose no threat to anyone and he could lead a normal life. There would be no deformities because the disease had been detected early. He would be completely cured.

Early intervention

From then on, as Ram Kumar's treatment began, the fear of leprosy receded. "I went to school, and played with other children. They didn't need to know my problem," reminisces Ram Kumar. "My parents and I knew there was no risk. We had understood that leprosy was just like any other disease."

Sustained treatment

For the next few years Ram Kumar was on a course of special medication and treatment. In time, the patch disappeared and after a complete check-up, the doctors pronounced him cured. "I started taking my shirt off in public," laughs Ram Kumar, "just to show I was as normal and healthy as anyone else."

What of the future? "Who knows," says Ram Kumar with an impish grin. "I might even become a doctor."

There is nothing to fear

The total count of leprosy patients in India is a staggering four million. Yet Ram Kumar's story is not an exception. Leprosy can be completely cured—with ease—and deformities can be prevented, provided the disease is detected and treated early. And provided you help children like him retain their place in society.

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Cross-currents

SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA

The Prime Minister's arrival at Palghat on the evening of 7 September was greeted by a pleasant drizzle. The crowds which had thronged the streets, to catch a glimpse of the man who has held out the promise of ushering in the 21st century, cheered the young Prime Minister as the motorcade passed through the streets of this Kerala town, which at one stage was known as a Communist stronghold. The mammoth turnout at the venue of the public meeting, perhaps, inspired Rajiv Gandhi to do some plain-speaking on subjects like Punjab, Assam and the problem of Sri Lanka Tamils. He admitted that the euphoria surrounding the agreements on Punjab and Assam notwithstanding, these were the "first steps to solve the problems." He elaborated: "Even after normalcy returns, the odd terrorist, the odd person with a totally incorrect attitude, will try to strike out." The Prime Minister could not have been more frank. When 85,000 securitymen are being deployed to ensure that polling can take place in Punjab, the threat of the "odd terrorist" does loom large.

After the Prime Minister returned to the capital on completion of his three-day tour of Kerala, one of the first subjects tackled by him in a cabinet meeting was the promulgation of an ordinance amending the Representation of Peoples Act, which ensured that the death of independent candidates could not countermand elections. By specifying that only the death of candidates put up by recognised political parties would hold up polling, the government narrowed down the scope of the security cover it will have to provide to the candidates in the Punjab poll fray. A few days before the ordinance was promulgated, newspaper reports from Chandigarh

had said that the Punjab government was considering the possibility of providing bullet-proof jackets to candidates. If this scheme is now implemented, the number of jackets to be provided has certainly been narrowed down.

The elections in Punjab are being held under grave threats from terrorists. The boycott of the polls by the "United" Akali Dal led by Bhindranwale's father, Baba Joginder Singh, has shown that this fanatic communal group is bent upon ensuring that normalcy should not return to the state. Not only has this party boycotted the elections, but also openly disowned the accord reached between the Prime Minister and the late Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. Establishment of "Sikh Raj" and a political system in which "religion is supreme and where only the *khalsa* (pure) rule," has been enunciated as the object of Baba Joginder Singh's party in a convention held at Amritsar on 8 September. Not only is the patriarch of the Sikh extremists fanning anti-national feelings, but he is also trying to oppose the basic tenet of the Indian political system: secularism. The politics of appeasement in Punjab, which has caused the release of people who had been jailed for anti-national activities, is tak-

ing its toll. Khalistan slogans were raised in the 8 September meeting. The warning signal was hoisted boldly.

The outcome of the elections in Punjab is unpredictable. The Congress(I) has not put up many known faces. One explanation is that the party does not want to let the old groups—one led by the former chief minister Darbara Singh and the other owing allegiance to Giani Zail Singh (after becoming the President of India he himself may not be actively involved in the affairs of this group, but old rivalries still exist)—control the party's affairs in the state. Reacting sharply to a suggestion made in a press conference that the Congress(I) was not putting up a tough fight in the elections, the AICC(I) general secretary, Srikant Verma, said, "The polling booth is hardly the place for a political party to commit *hara-kiri*."

Certainly, no one can accuse the official spokesman of the Congress headquarters for not having refuted the insinuation that the Congress(I) did not want to take the fight in Punjab seriously. But the realities of Punjab may prove that by offering a weak fight in the state the ruling party in the centre was, in fact, avoiding *hara-kiri*.

The creation of a panth-

ic government in Punjab has been announced by the Shiromani Akali Dal to be the last wish of the slain Sant Longowal. The victory of the Akali Dal in the elections may be the logical culmination of the process of normalisation which was initiated by the Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal accord. Even if the Akalis fail to secure a majority, it would be the attempt of the central government to help the party to form a government in the state. The presence of Amrinder Singh, the scion of the former ruling family of Patiala, in the Akali camp is a boon in disguise for the Congress(I). Amrinder Singh is not contesting the Lok Sabha elections despite his having been the sitting member from Patiala in the seventh Lok Sabha (he quit the seat and left the Congress-I in protest against Operation Bluestar). He has opted for the Assembly elections instead, which shows that his interest now is focused on state politics. The infighting in the Akali Dal following Longowal's death has created a situation under which none of the established Akali leaders are able to dominate the party. The emergence of Amrinder Singh on the legislative front and Baba Ajit Singh, the Jathedar of Ropar, on the organisational plane now seems imminent. The acting president of the party, Surjit Singh Barnala, may not be able to retain his hold over the party organisation for too long.

The uncertainties in the Congress(I) and the Shiromani Akali Dal camps will come to the fore in the coming weeks. The threat held out by Baba Joginder Singh's men will make matters worse. The "odd person" referred to by the Prime Minister in his Palghat speech will have to be dealt with a firm hand. The success of polling in Punjab is an acid test for Indian democracy.

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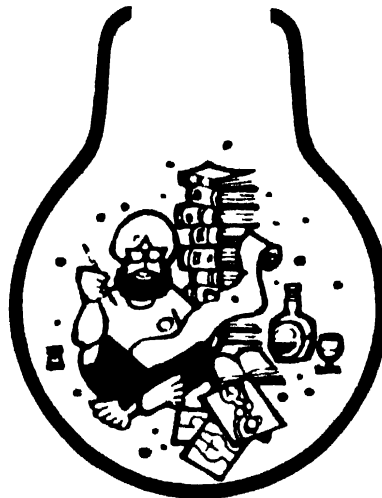
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Occult Experiences

In the bird man, Salim Ali, I have found a kindred soul. Despite his avowed agnosticism he has sneaking respect for phenomenon that reason cannot explain. In his eminently readable autobiography, *The Fall of a Sparrow* (Oxford University Press), he narrates two episodes which despite the language of disbelief he uses, seem to have left a deep impression on his mind.

In 1935 one Kshirsagar, a school teacher in Satara wrote to Salim Ali's elder brother, Hamid Ali who had been the collector of Satara, asking for help to pay for his son's sea journey to the United States. Hamid Ali then living in retirement in Musorie sent him a bank draft of Rs 1000—a big sum of money in those days. Fifty years later Kshirsagar died. His son who had by then retired from the post of registrar at a Gujarat university had his father's obsequies performed. As custom required he offered cooked rice to crows. A flock collected but none of the birds would touch the offering. An elder of the family ascribed the strange behaviour of the crows to some debt incurred by the deceased person remaining undischarged. Kshirsagar junior recalled the money lent to his father by Hamid Ali and vowed in front of the assembled relations to repay the debt as soon as possible. Whereupon the crows fell on the rice and devoured it. A few days later Kshirsagar went to Bombay, located Salim Ali who, on his brother's death, had been named executor of his will, repaid the money lent to his father half a century ago and told him of the way the crows had behaved.

The second incident happened to another brother, Aamir Ali, and took place in Burma in 1919. A little distance from the town they lived in, was a Buddhist monastery with a pool full of carp. The fish were regarded sacred, fed by pilgrims and no one dared to lay their hands on them. One morning the two brothers went to the monastery and finding no one near the pool, Aamir picked up a stone and hurled it into a seething mass of carps. No sooner they got back home, Aamir complained of stiffness in the joints. By the evening his temperature had gone up. Two days later it was diagnosed as rheumatic fever. Nine days after the stone throwing, Aamir Ali was dead.



Mussalman Ka Peer

I have a letter from a Partap Singh Colera, a cloth merchant in Jacobabad (Pakistan). The name sounds as if it belonged to a Sikh, it could just as well be that of a Sindhi Hindu. Enclosed in the envelope is a clipping from an English paper and a colour brochure announcing a full length colour feature film on Guru Nanak in English and Punjabi, texts written by Minhaj Khan who will also produce it. It is to be an entirely Pakistani venture and will cover the Guru's pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina and Muslim shrines in Baghdad. The film will be entitled "*Guru Nanak Ji Satkar*". The *gurbani* already recorded is in the voices of Lata Mangeshkar, Professor Darshan Singh and raagis Satnam Singh and Harbans Singh.

I am glad the film will be made in Pakistan and not in India. Similar ventures on the lives of other gurus and even Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to grief due to objections raised by obscurantist *theykedars* (self appointed spokesmen) of the *panth*. One was on Guru Gobind Singh commissioned by Messrs Dunlop. I wrote its script and made sure that no image of the Guru would be shown (Sikhs are as particular about that as the Muslims of their Prophet) and based it entirely on the Guru's travels. Guru Gobind's hymns were sung by the late raagi, Santa Singh. Against my advice the film was shown to some *jathedars* to get their approval. They wanted money and it was not forthcoming and while they could find no fault with the film, they came down to arguing that while being screened the audience would have its shoes on and some may be smoking. This would hurt Sikh sentiment. The completed film has remained in its cans ever since.

It is difficult to see how a Pakistan can make this film without coming to India and visiting Bangladesh where many Guru Nanak's shrines exist to this day. I hope Indians will lend Minhaj Khan a helping hand. All said and done Nanak was as the saying goes:

Guru Nanak
The King of Holy men Shah
Lakeer
Hindu Ka Guru Mussalman Ka
Peer

Professional Liars

A public opinion poll organisation has conducted research into the average citizens' views of people in different professions. Professionals chosen were ministers of the church, government ministers, doctors, teachers, judges, policemen, newscasters, politicians and journalists. The question put to the selected one thousand was: "Would you generally trust them to tell the truth?" From the answers to the question it would appear that white faces rate most professions including the police as more truthful than newscasters, politicians, or journalists. I wonder what the results would be if a similar public opinion poll were to be conducted in India. I am pretty certain that doctors, teachers and judges would get higher truth ratings, policemen, politicians and government ministers would come pretty low on word reliability. I am not as certain how our journalists would fare. My hunch is that they would get an honourable rating. A lying journalist gets a very short shift in professional circles. It is because of the trust placed in his word and opinions that he makes the grade. When it comes to politicians there is no difference of opinion between the races: they are the world's champion liars.

By God's Grace

A fourth son was born in the home of a minister's family. The father invited his Sardar friend to join the celebration and choose a name for the new born child. "What names have you given to the three elder boys?" asked the Sardar.

"One is Rahmat Elahi (by God's kindness), the second Barkat Elahi (by God's grace) and the third Mahbub Elahi (beloved of God)," replied the proud father.

The Sardar pondered over the names for a while and replied, "I suggest you name your fourth son, 'Bas Kar Elahi (God, that is enough).'"

(Contributed by Mr Hadi of Chittagong, Bangladesh)

Politics of Peace

Rajiv Gandhi deserves yet another rap on the back for resolving the Assam imbroglio close on the heels of signing the Punjab accord (*Assam: The End of a Nightmare* 25—31 August). The leaders of the AASU and the AAGSP as well as the Assam chief minister Hiteswar Saikia should be eulogised for acting as positive catalysts in reaching the settlement. The centre's decisions that a caretaker government replace the present ministry till the time of the elections, the revision of electoral rolls, formulating the cut off year for identification and disenfranchisement of foreign nationals and conducting fresh elections to the state Assembly and the Lok Sabha are steps in the right direction. One only hopes that the student leaders of Assam will help the administration in the implementation of the accord.

K Chidanand Kumar Bangalore

• Under the able leadership of Rajiv Gandhi another complex problem has been solved. All those agitating in different parts of the country should draw a lesson from the accord: demands can be achieved only through negotiations and not through blackmail or bloodshed. We should never forget that Mahatma Gandhi led a non-violent agitation for independence.

P Ramani Ahmedabad

• Our young PM deserves to be commended for his efforts in solving the Assam problem. A section of the press and some opposition leaders have criticised the accord but then there are bound to be criticisms when such a complex and sensitive issue is concerned. In the face of the crises facing our country, we should all stand by the settlement.

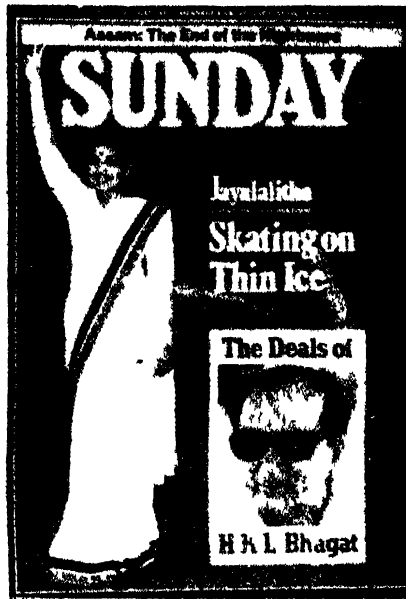
Nirjhar Das Gupta Calcutta

• The perseverance and will power shown by the AASU and the AAGSP leaders for their cause deserve to be appreciated. The hankering for political mileage has done considerable harm to our country.

M V Ravindran Ahmedabad

• Inoshai Pandit gave an objective analysis of the Assam problem and the consequences of the accord that was signed in New Delhi. On paper the agreement looks fine but there will be problems in implementing it. The West Bengal chief minister, Jyoti Basu, has openly opposed the accord.

F C Umesh Jamshedpur



A Star's Dilemma

Anita Pratap in *Jayalalitha: Skating on Thin Ice* (25—31 August) brought out the dilemma of the star-turned politician. Jayalalitha in a bid to emerge as a powerful politician is hobnobbing with the centre and the Congress(I) leaders of the state. This is being viewed by political pundits as a threat to the Dravidian parties in the state. The one-time heroine in MGR stardom should realise that the people of Tamil Nadu will oppose her evil designs.

N Ellango Tiruchelvi

• Even Jayalalitha's critics have acknowledged that the former cine star is endowed with a personality that fetches votes. Her oratory mesmerises her audience. Her fall from grace is due to her outbursts against MGR and his wife Janaki. However, MGR, the shrewd politician that he is, will not let Jayalalitha down because he needs her to counter the growing influence of the Congress(I) in the state.

G Krishnamurthy Hyderabad

• No matter what Jayalalitha utters against MGR, the people of Tamil Nadu are behind the chief minister. No politician can ever hope to capture power in the state as long as MGR is around.

Ramnath Bose Kadayannallur

Next Week

Jayalalitha's rejoinder to the cover story, *Jayalalitha Skating on Thin Ice* (25—31 August) and *SUNDAY*'s reply.

A Reign of Terror

The brutal and cold blooded murder of Lalit Maken and his wife has shaken the people of Delhi (*The Mafia of Delhi* 18—24 August). The Delhi police thought that with the signing of the Punjab accord terrorism would come to an end. But once again they were proved wrong. If the activities of the criminals continue unabated, Delhi will soon be known as the crime capital of India.

R Rajesh Gupta Ahmedabad

• The police and the politicians are equally to blame for the state of affairs prevailing in Delhi. The Mafia is flexing its muscles since it enjoys political patronage.

Masihuzzama Aurangabad

• The extremists have let loose a reign of terror. They are so well organised that they have even succeeded in penetrating the security ring around the VIPs. I wonder why our policemen have suddenly become so inefficient. Or is it that they are being prevented to carry out their duties?

Arpita Mukherjee New Delhi

• After the brilliant expose of Bhajan Lal in *H K L Bhagat: The Revelations* regarding the parliamentary affairs minister are astounding. It is surprising that Mr Bhagat has moved up the ladder in spite of his dubious past. Our Prime Minister has promised us a clean administration but how can we believe his words when people like H K L Bhagat continue occupying high offices.

A K Chattopadhyay Ranchi

More Serials, Please

The rate at which Doordarshan is telecasting serials, it is apparent that they are minting money (*Doordarshan: The Money Machine*, 18—24 August). But sadly most of the serials being telecast are either plagiarised or contrived non-professionally. It is time Doordarshan gave due importance to the opinion of the general public. They should conduct surveys in rural and urban areas and scrap the unpopular serials. Moreover, apart from a few sponsored programmes, most of the others are dull and boring.

Arta Mishra Cuttack

• *Rajani* is popular since the serial deals with practical problems. I expect Doordarshan to air a few more of such programmes.

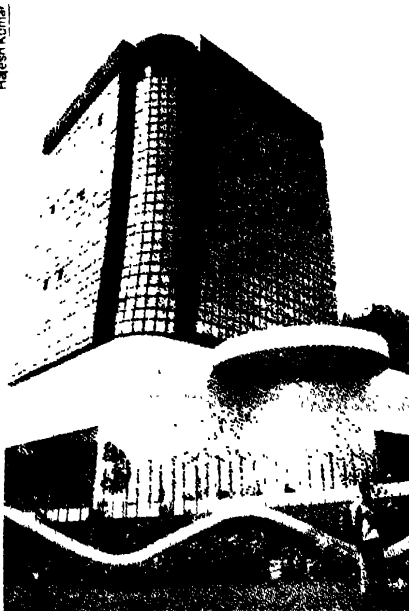
B N Bose, Jamshedpur

Have Concessions Been Granted to the Meridien Hotel?

I would like to point out certain erroneous statements made by the correspondent in the special report *The Meridien Muddle* (25—31 August). To start with, there is no truth whatsoever in the statement that Charanjit Singh had at any time thought of disposing "his half-completed Meridien project" to Amitabh Bachchan or anyone else. If Mr Bachchan was buying the hotel, why should he have "evinced interest in the purchase of one of the ten penthouse apartments on the eighth floor of the hotel which are being leased out by C.J. International?" The correspondent should have checked facts with Mr Bachchan or Mr Singh to get the truth. A more serious and utterly unfounded allegation is that Charanjit Singh is planning to leave the country shortly. The insinuation is clear that the Sikhs are an unpatriotic people who would like to get out of India if they can. The correspondent has tried to cast aspersions on the entire community by maligning Charanjit Singh. The construction of the hotel has progressed smoothly and if Ritu Sarin has any inside information of its progressing in "fits and starts" we certainly do not know about it. She has further alleged that "it is a premeditated move on part of C.J. International to alter its original designs and obtain clearance for excessive commercial area." This is also totally incorrect. The whole project is being executed in accordance with the provisions of the lease and with the due sanction of the NDMC. The correspondent goes on to state that "another factor that has caused grievances to hoteliers is the role of the financial institutions in giving credit to Meridien Hotel." How are the loans given to hotel Meridien causing grievances to other hotels? Is the correspondent trying to take up the cause of other hotels against the Meridien? As a matter of fact, no undue favour has been shown to Meridien. Even Ms Sarin has admitted that Meridien is paying Rs 2.68 crores for its lease which is higher than the figure paid by any other hotel in the country. The article is highly motivated, exaggerated and factually incorrect. Achla R. Mohan, Manager, Public Relations, C.J. International Hotels Ltd., New Delhi

Ritu Sarin replies: Achla Mohan's letter aims at pointing out "certain erroneous statements" in the special report. I am surprised that not only has she failed to point out any errors

in my article, it is obvious that she has not even bothered to read the piece carefully before rushing to the conclusion that it was "highly motivated, exaggerated and factually incorrect." To begin with, nowhere does the article state that Charanjit Singh, chairman of C.J. International, was selling the Meridien, or better still, selling it to Amitabh Bachchan, MP. If Mrs Mohan had read carefully, she would not have missed the lines, "Now, at least, with the opening of a section of the hotel for commercial purposes, all rumours of its being sold have been laid to rest." From this it is clear that the purpose was not to air rumours concerning the hotel, but to lay them to rest.



The Meridien under construction

As far as seeking the clarifications of Charanjit Singh is concerned, the author of the letter would have been best advised to check whether this correspondent did so or not. The fact is that not only did I seek an appointment with the chairman but also with other senior officials of C.J. International including the finance manager and the sales manager. Does the manager, public relations, not recall my meeting with her when she directed me to the chairman's office? The chairman's office repeatedly told me that Charanjit Singh would not like to comment on the "sensitive issue." It is indeed surprising that Mrs Mohan has found fault with the comment that the Meridien Hotel is being constructed in "fits and starts." How many years more does

Charanjit Singh need to complete his hotel of 371 suites when it was scheduled to be ready for the 1982 Asian Games? On what basis can the C.J. International boast that their prestigious project has progressed "smoothly" when there have been so many complaints against them and a pile of legal cases pending from persons connected with the project? The question of how smooth the progress has been and how much in accordance with the provisions laid down with the lessee, the NDMC, need not be answered by us. The C.J. International would have in its files by now, the notice which was sent to it following the SUNDAY report for illegal occupancy of the hotel. As reported by this correspondent, commercial service in the Meridien Hotel commenced on 15 July, but without the mandatory conditions of the NDMC being completed. The NDMC has now itself taken cognisance of the violations and demanded that the Meridien immediately halt commercial services till the completion certificate is received and till other requirements like the fire-safety certificate are fulfilled. The C.J. International faces the prospect of closure but perhaps will still insist that they have not violated any norms and their hotel project has only "progressed smoothly."

The objective of my report was not to take up the cause of other hotels against the Meridien, as has been hinted in the letter. Its objective was to reveal the obvious concessions which the hotel has managed to corner and the reckless public financing to the tune of Rs 50 crores to a delayed project which has continued despite violating every rule in the book. Again, the letter states that the Meridien is paying Rs 2.68 crores to the NDMC as annual rent. In her hurry to point out mistakes, Mrs Mohan has, as usual, missed the facts as stated. The report clearly mentions that Rs 2.68 crores is the rent C.J. International "has to pay." Also, it was never the intention of this correspondent to smear the reputation of the chairman, Charanjit Singh or cast aspersions on his community. The intention was to throw light on the rules which have been flouted by the hotel and the concessions manipulated by Mr Singh. We still maintain that, till such time clearances are obtained by C.J. International, its commercial services are posing a threat to hundreds of guests visiting it daily.

'Not Guilty'

Are inquiries into politicians' affairs redundant?

Crimes of the powerful tease and test, mock and mar all our notions of human rights and justice. Among the powerful, there is a kind of fraternity: you do not punish one of your own, unless you really have to. So, people in high places get away, in a literal sense, with loot and plunder, and even rape and murder. If ordinary folk in the countryside ask for accountability and justice, there emerges suddenly and sharply the notorious law-and-order problem. "Ask for accountability and you get the CRPF" has been, more or less, the standard response of the Indian state and its managers to ordinary people's outcries against the crimes of the powerful.

But not all people are ordinary. Certainly, educated people in big cities with a voice have to be managed quite differently. In a word, not with a stick but with a carrot. The carrot is an enquiry. The middle-class intelligentsia just loves judicial enquiries. The demand for such inquiries signifies the highest level of political consciousness and consensus among them. Setting up a commission of enquiry or asking a retired Justice of the Supreme Court to "look into" charges against a minister is quite a different thing than

By Prof. Upendra Baxi

smashing the skulls of the poor who protest against the local party boss or the policeman, revenue or forest officer who makes a living out of their meagre earnings and derives pleasure out of regularly raping their women. The commission of enquiry is certainly not direct repression; it is sublimated repression, all the same.

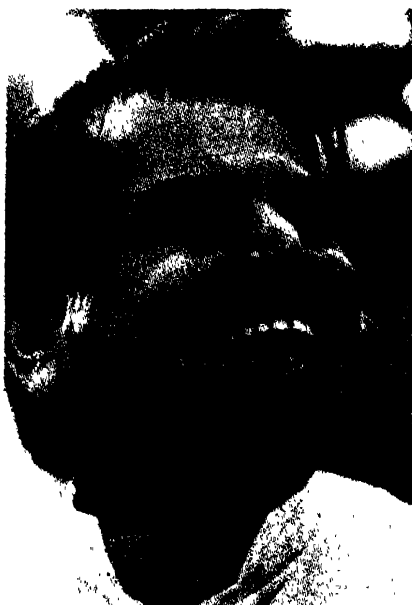
Milan Kundera has said memorably that the struggle for men against power is a struggle of memory against forgetfulness. Everywhere, power and law determine patterns of public forgetfulness, lest public memory be a prod for struggle against lawlessness or injustice. Enquiries are a way of disorganising public memory and institutionalising forgetfulness. Contrary to the common saying, public memory is not short; rather it is shortened by the actual operation of the political system.

Middle-class intelligentsia is also a part of this system. They move from one *cause celebre* to another, the expose of decadence becoming in the process a fine art and a civic virtue. And our system thrives on such periodic exposes; it testifies to the fact that ours is an open society and a vigorous democracy. We hold a world record in commissions of enquiry; no other liberal democracy in its first three decades has set up so many and so varied commissions of enquiry into excesses of public power. And most of these have been exposed by a free press, an effective parliamentary process and public opinion. No one, in his right mind, can deny this. Everyone is happy save the victims of abuse of power (tough luck, they can never be happy). And the fine democratic traditions keep growing apace.

Certainly, enquiries into the affairs of political persons are relevant, and even crucial, to the maintenance of the appearance of the bourgeois liberal democracy. If we want these to be relevant for the reality of democracy as well, we will have to struggle to formulate a new public ethic based on the maxim: "Criminal activities ought not to be a

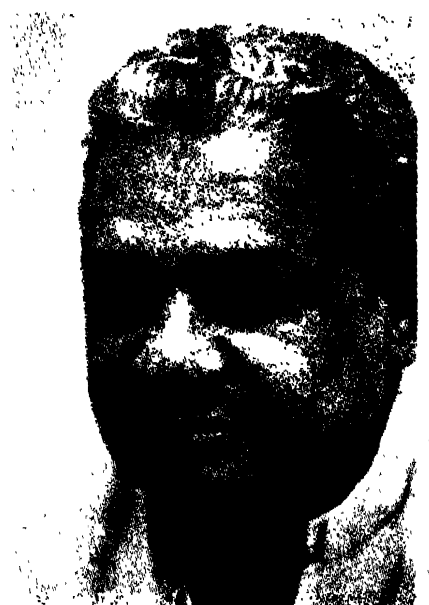
part of democratic politics."

This maxim compels a number of consequences. First, political parties must become legal entities (that is, either registered societies, trusts, charitable institutions or any other format) subject to public auditing of their funds and expenditure. Second, the assets and tax liabilities of all members of Legislature and Parliament, and of the organisational wings of political parties, must annually be disclosed to the people through their being placed on the floor of the House. Third, all parties should be required to have their own anti-corruption bureaus or party ombudspersons to whom any member of the public can publicly approach. Fourth, the office of the public prosecutor should be made, by law or Constitution, a separate and autonomous office, with duties of periodic public reports. Fifth, impediments like prior sanction of the executive for the prosecution of a public servant should be removed. Sixth, the Indian Penal Code should have a new and separate part declaring a new category of offences labelled as "offences against people by officials of the state" (the code has at present three classic divisions: offences against person, property and



A.R. Antulay

Durgaprasad



Bhajan Lal

state) Seventh, the law should inhibit irresponsible and malicious complaints against people in power without discouraging the flow of *bona fide* complaints. Eighth, special courts should be created to deal expeditiously with these complaints, with only a single appeal to the Supreme Court of India.

Are these unreasonable or impractical suggestions? Intelligent Indians, including those in political parties, media and academia, must think so, for not a single one of these have become or has been allowed even to become a focal point of public opinion campaign.

So, what do we have? The device of some judicial enquiry into charges of corruption or lawlessness against public persons. A retired Justice of the Supreme Court is exhumed, and pressed into service, he or she may or may not be well versed in criminal law and procedure or evidence—bodies of law expertise which are required to effectively probe into such matters. We have to get rid of the idea that knowledge and expertise also come *ex officio* a unique contribution of Indian democracy to world culture. Even if a retired judge has the expertise we do not know how he or she is selected out of so many available. It is clear that Justice J C Shah or Justice Jaganmohan Sinha will never be invited to make a preliminary enquiry by a Congress(I)

government, neither would the opposition, were it the government, invite Justices A N Ray or H M Beg. The available range is thus on all sides limited. The opposition then condemned Justice Vaidyalingham's exoneration of Kanti Morarji Desai as a "farce," the opposition now condemns Justice Jaswant Singh's exoneration of chief minister Bhajan Lal in similar terms. A piquant situation would indeed arise if an association of retired Justices of the Supreme Court and High Courts were to come into existence and resolve that they would not assist any government or party by holding such *prima facie* enquiries, which is really the function of a magistrate or a sessions judge and the public prosecutor.

The commissions of enquiry are no more than arsenals of political warfare. Rarely do they have anything to do with or result in achievement of human rights or social justice. The findings of the commission, wherever they incriminate the powerful, do not automatically result in criminal prosecution, and prosecutions, where launched, rarely result in conviction. Indeed, often there is a competition to set up commissions of enquiry. Look at the classic Karnataka case, where both the centre and the state set up commissions to enquire into the conduct of an incumbent chief minister. This led to extreme judicial acrobatics by the Supreme Court

which had to decide who had the better title to protect people from abuse of power.

At best, reports of such commissions may serve the function of public education. But who needs to be educated? The victims of abuse of power know what it means to be victims. For those who are not, who has the time or the inclination for this adult education? And where are the teachers? Indeed, where are the reports? Try obtaining the reports of various commissions today.

This leaves the courts. But most judges will decide in accordance with the law as they understand it, and the law regards the theft of five rupees the same way as it regards the swindling of the nation's resources. Only rarely does an activist judge emerge to forge new weapons from old arsenal to fight the crimes of the powerful.

Political *shikars*, in these days of strident emphasis on protection of wildlife, are now the big game hunting events. An exciting sport, if you are bored with the passivity of the imported VCRs and Doordarshan. To ask whether such a sport is relevant is to ask for a little variation to make it more exciting. I am sorry I can't propose any. I confess to a lack of sporting spirit. I'd rather concentrate on structural ways to assist tens of thousands of Indian citizens who are currently hunted by all sorts of people in power.

Corruption has Ceased to be a Dirty Word

By Nikhil Chakravartty

Political personalities by the very nature of their occupation enjoy certain advantages and also face certain hazards which an average citizen in a democracy neither enjoys nor is exposed to. A politician worth the name flourishes in the limelight. He or she is the cynosure of public gaze. And this brings the politician accolades as also brickbats at times.

Being at the very centre of public life, the politician certainly enjoys relatively widespread influence as compared to anybody else pursuing other vocations. The more important among them—particularly those who

happen to hold offices wielding varying degrees of power—command an authority over not only the political but the economic set up as well. This makes the politician vulnerable to allurements held out by moneybags anxious to get round laws and restrictions that are meant to curb venal or irregular practices. This, in a nutshell, is the mechanics of corruption in political life in our country. From "special favours" to collecting kickbacks on big contracts, from abusing authority to push personal vested interests even at the cost of the national interests—corruption in our country as also in

other parts of the world is multifaceted as also multidimensional.

Rarely does a politician get exposed. It is an open secret that compared to the wide diversification of corruption in our political life today, the number of cases of detection or exposure is almost negligible. In fact, corruption has ceased to be a dirty word in our public life today, a measure of the nation's progress in the four decades since independence.

Just at this moment, the question has assumed a measure of notoriety because of the acquittal of A R Antulay of the charges of irregularity

and malpractice by a High Court judge as also the absolution secured by the equally versatile Bhajan Lal of the various charges of misdeemeanour by a probing judge. In both cases, the charges were brought forward by the political opponents of the two concerned characters, and so the two might have counted on some measure of public reservation that their misdeeds could possibly have been exaggerated for partisan considerations: not that they were innocents but that the opposition went to town over the allegation against them to make political capital out of them. In other words such characters rely to some extent on the calculation that the public by nature is not as gullible as it is often made out to be.

Obviously, neither Antulay nor Bhajan Lal has a record of lily white innocence. Antulay, it may be recalled, had once to face in Maharashtra Assembly the charge of having some links with the smugglers' club when he was a junior minister. The uproar led to an enquiry by the then Bombay Congress president, Rajni Patel but to the discerning eye it was a face-saving operation, nothing more, nothing less. So, when the uproar broke out over the exposure of his allegedly extorted donations for the Indira Pratisthan Trust—the exposure material, it can be stated reliably, had been quietly supplied by the opposition politicians—Antulay was not protected in the public esteem of his having a record without blemish, and to that measure, he had to face a handicap. Even today, his acquittal by the High Court does not automatically provide him with a verdict of innocence at the bar of public opinion.

As for Bhajan Lal, let it not be forgotten that he belongs to a tribal belt where *ava-ram-gaya-ram* politics has a history of nearly three decades—a game which both the Congress and the opposition have played in different periods. In fact, Bhajan Lal's smooth walk over to the Congress(I) within a few days of Indira Gandhi's spectacular come-back to power in January 1980, was the most remarkable act of political defection in contemporary history of India. When he came over with his flock to the Congress(I), Bhajan Lal or his supporters could not be accused of not having a record of corruption. But the opposition at that point of time was in such a shattered condition that it was not in position to come out with a charge-sheet as such.

The crucial point to note in the treatment of corruption in present-day Indian politics is that those in

Politics is not always a corrupt game. But morality has a place in it only as an adjunct of the political element. There is no such thing as absolute morality in politics—not even in the case of Plato's philosophers.

office are not removed just because they are corrupt but they face the music when they become politically vulnerable. And when they become politically vulnerable it is only then that their cupboards are broken open and all the skeletons are brought out. So long as a politician is invulnerable, the cupboards are kept locked and safe.

A few outstanding examples can be mentioned. K D Malaviya was charged for a very minor impropriety connected with his dealings with a firm. But Malaviya had to face the powerful onslaught of the very powerful lobby of the giant oil companies. So long as Nehru was strong enough to withstand western pressures, Malaviya could go ahead with his programme of indigenous oil production. When after the Chinese aggression, Nehru was no longer in a position to withstand western pressures, the lobby against Malaviya was strong enough to get him out of the cabinet.

From "special favours" to collecting kickbacks on big contracts, from abusing authority to push personal vested interests even at the cost of the national interests—corruption in our country as also in other parts of the world is multi-faceted as also multi-dimensional.

T.T. Krishnamachari was dropped from the cabinet by Lal Bahadur Shastri on the apparent plea that he refused to be probed because of his irregularities in handling the affairs of a company. But careful observers in New Delhi had no doubt that Krishnamachari had to quit the Shastri cabinet because he refused to surrender to the pressure of the World Bank for the devaluation of the rupee.

Biju Patnaik had to face a large number of corruption charges. With his prevailing pull at the centre in those days, the enquiry report was not forthcoming, and it required heroic efforts on the part of my friend Surendra Mohan Trivedy to place it before Parliament. Biju had to face many cases, but politically he did not seem to have lost face because of corruption. If he is not at the top at the moment, this is not because of the corruption charges against him, but because of the vagaries of political weather which he seems to have mustered in recent times.

There was a big uproar over Pratap Singh Karon's alleged irregularities. Nehru appointed a commission, whose judge knew Nehru, reluctant to part with Karon. But unfortunately for Karon, Nehru died when the commission report was being prepared. The judge also knew that Shastri was rather critical of Karon, and so the commission verdict went against Karon. A very close scrutiny of the bulky report makes this clear.

This brings one to the point that the judges, however august they may be, do not claim to have totally divested themselves of their subjectivity. The best of them make very honest efforts to be severely objective, and there seem to be quite a few who would not pass such a test. It is therefore not always an accident that their verdict in many cases seem to reflect their assessment of the respective strength of the contending sides in the case, and few would like to be on the wrong side.

The question whether enquiries into the affairs of politicians are redundant, therefore, cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. Two factors decide the issue. First, the judges and their capacity to be firmly objective. Second, the political strength or weakness of the politician placed in the dock. Politics is not always a corrupt game. But morality has a place in it only as an adjunct of the political element. There is no such thing as absolute morality in politics—not even in the case of Plato's philosophers.

First Round to A.R. Antulay

Although the former Maharashtra chief minister has been absolved and the charges against him dismissed, he still faces the private complaint filed by BJP member Ramdas Nayak

The criminal complaint filed against A.R. Antulay, former Maharashtra chief minister, under the Prevention of Corruption Act is historical. It was the first complaint filed by a private individual in a magistrate's court. It was possible because last year the Supreme Court had held that a private person could file a complaint. Hitherto, because of various provisions in the Prevention of Corruption Act, it was necessary for investigating officers to first find out more about the complaint and only then could any charges be filed. The Act did not envisage any place for a private complainant.

However, Mr Antulay was exonerated by the special judge, Justice Dinshaw Mehta, of the Bombay High Court from criminal charges filed by Janata Party member Mr P.B. Samant in his individual capacity. The charges against him were corruption and abuse of office under the Prevention of Corruption Act. In his capacity as chief minister he had "fraudulently or dishonestly" induced the cabinet and the two houses of the state legislature to deliver to the Indira Gandhi Pratibha Pratisthan (IGPP) a total sum of rupees two crores. There was a further charge of cheating under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code.

Delivering his judgment over two days, 2 and 3 September, Justice Mehta said that the former finance minister Ramrao Adik had deposed that every member of the cabinet was fully aware that the IGPP was a non-government body and that there was no misrepresentation to the cabinet. He also observed that rupees ten lakhs from the contingency fund was sanctioned by the Expenditure Priority Committee.

The then finance secretary, V. Prabhakar, had even reduced the money from the contingency fund from Rs 25 lakhs, as originally demanded, to rupees ten lakhs. On the abuse of power by Mr Antulay, Justice Mehta observed that Article 282 of the Constitution provides for a grant-in-aid for public purposes and that a government could

set up institutions for the benefit of artists, litterateurs, scientists and religious associations. Therefore, he could not accept that a public servant was not empowered to set up a trust and that it was an abuse of office.

While dismissing all the arguments put forward by the prosecution, the judge said that if any irregularity was admitted for the sake of argument, it was with institutions like the Charity Commissioner's Office. In another instance, Justice Mehta observed that if witness G.P. Pradhan, the then leader of the opposition, had any doubts about the nature of the IGPP he could have checked up the trust deed. Not only did he not do this, but he never brought up this issue in the Legislative Council. Justice Mehta further observed that "it is difficult to believe the insistence of Pradhan that his impression was that the IGPP was a government trust. However, in the face of the written record of the case, I do not think that such insistence can be a virtue in a reasonable man..."

The main complainant in the case, P.B. Samant, came out poorly.

Justice Mehta recounted in his judgment that the counsel for the defence, R.D. Ovalekar, had challenged the bona fides of the complainant by charging that he had deliberately suppressed certain facts (for instance, that he was a builder and that his entire family—wife, sons, daughter, various in-laws—were all in the building industry), and had uttered falsehoods in the writ petition filed in 1981, wherein he had said that he had applied for five bags of cement and did not get any from Mr Antulay. In fact, in another application in his own name he received 20 metric tonnes of cement. In conclusion, Justice Mehta said, "I should have thought that corrupt and illegal acts were always performed in the darkness and hatched beyond the glare of the public eye and not carried on with the approval and sanction of august bodies like the Legislative Assembly and Council and the cabinet. I am, therefore, of the view that corrupt and illegal means and misuse of office have not been proved by the prosecution."

Mr Antulay, however, still faces another private complaint filed by

A.R. Antulay amidst jubilant supporters: exonerated

Courtesy: Free Press Journal



the BJP member Mr Ramdas Nayak. That case is expected to come up on 16 September in the Bombay High Court before Justice Mehta.

While P.B. Samant has yet to decide whether he intends to challenge Justice Mehta's judgment in the Supreme Court, a curious development has occurred only four

days after the judgment. Mrs Shalini Patil, the star witness in Ramdas Nayak's case, and a former revenue minister in Mr Antulay's cabinet, has issued a statement. She said that the state cabinet had at a meeting on 6 October 1980 decided to establish a trust called the IGPP. The resolution said, "This will be a Maharashtra government trust. The

chief minister will be its chairman. The Maharashtra government will donate rupees two crores to this trust and rupees three crores will be collected from the people. Artists, poets, litterateurs, etc. are to be assisted from this trust." Mrs Shalini Patil has ostensibly issued this statement as she says, "It was necessary that this cabinet resolution should come before the court, so that the entire picture would be clear in the public interest." This gives a new twist to the case, particularly since her own colleague Ramrao Adik had clearly said that it was not a government trust, and that Mr Antulay had not misrepresented facts to the cabinet.

So, what is the future of political corruption? Can political corruption really be tackled by the courts? With one case decided in favour of the accused and the other yet to conclude, this is a question that is agitating the minds of the people. According to a leading criminal lawyer, who did not want to be named, it is impossible to fight corruption through the courts. He said, "In courts, sometimes the entire truth does not come out. It is difficult for the court to assess the truth from half-truths. The declaration of assets at the time of contesting the elections can bring some control on political corruption. Assets will be powerful circumstantial evidence to implicate a person. Annual declarations are even more necessary for high government officials concerned with the issue of licences or those dealing with income-tax, customs, central excise and related matters. There should be a nationwide policy for this." He also suggested that there should be summary courts for trying cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act. As soon as a person is trapped he must be asked to give his version without the help of a lawyer. In the game that goes on in court, the truth is often lost.

Moreover, the machinery that prosecutes should be honest, operate without malice and collect genuine evidence. This machinery should be built up by selecting individuals who have a sense of dignity and national spirit. They should be taken when young and still in law college. This, incidentally, is how the FBI of the United States recruits its people. In a private complaint entertained by the court, there is a lot of malice. Even Justice Mehta observed the "political undertones" that have run through the Antulay case.

Lokpal: A Permanent Tribunal of Enquiry?

No less than 18 commissions of Enquiry have been set up by the central and state governments, till now, to examine charges of corruption against political leaders. While all of them have generally confirmed the veracity of these charges, no action has been taken regarding them. This tradition continues.

- In 1964, the Government of India set up a committee under the chairmanship of K. Santhanam to study the causes of corruption and suggest measures for checking it. The Santhanam committee made as many as 137 recommendations including the immediate establishment of the Central Vigilance Commission.

- The Administrative Reforms Commission was set up in 1966. In its first interim report, it recommended a two-tier machinery—of the Lokpal and the Lokayukta—for the redressal of citizens' grievances.

- The Lokpal and Lokayukta Bill 1968, introduced in May 1968, was passed in the Lok Sabha in August 1969. The Bill could not get through the Rajya Sabha in the 'fourth Parliament' which was dissolved in December 1970.

- Reintroduced in 1971, the Lokpal and Lokayukta Bill lapsed again on the dissolution of the fifth Lok Sabha.

- A fresh Bill entitled the Lokpal Bill 1977, was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 1977. It was referred to a joint committee of Parliament which submitted its report on July 1978. However, this time too, the Lok Sabha was dissolved and the Bill lapsed.

In the proposed legislation, the Lokpal is sought to be empowered to inquire into complaints made against a public functionary (minister, minister of state, deputy minister and parliamentary secretary of the union government) who has committed any offence punishable

under chapter IX of the Indian Penal Code or under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947. The offences listed under chapter IX of the IPC include taking graft in office, disobeying the law or framing an incorrect document to cause injury to any person, engaging in unlawful trade and buying or bidding for property. Another offence is the abetment of offences defined in 162, 163 of IPC. However, the Lokpal will not have the power to undertake inquiries *suo moto*. There is a special provision for discouraging frivolous, vexatious and false complaints, where action is taken by the Lokpal himself. Section 21 prohibits publication of information regarding the complaints, including the identity of the complainant and the public functionary against whom the complaint has been made. It also provides for an *in camera* inquiry.

The exclusion of the Prime Minister from the jurisdiction of the Lokpal raises a debatable point. The government maintains that the office of the Prime Minister is a unique one and any allegations in order to malign it would destabilise the country. But when this issue came up in front of the joint committee on the 1968 Bill, the late Mohan Kumaramangalam advocated to include the Prime Minister on the plea that he is only the first among the equals in the cabinet. Jayaprakash Narain, and others too, made a very forceful campaign to include the Prime Minister within the ambit of the Lokpal as it would enhance prestige and respectability and affect the conduct of all public persons. In order to make the institution of the Lokpal really effective, it should be given the power not only to inquire but investigate as well. It should not merely present a report but be allowed to forcefully punish the offender.

Shyam Sunder Tulsian

Olga Tellez, Bombay

"I Have Studied in Three of the Country's Most Prestigious Institutions"

Bhajan Lal's son-in-law, Anoop Bishnoi, replies to the opposition's allegations

I was not shocked or surprised at the charges which were levelled against me in the memorandum submitted by the opposition leaders to the Prime Minister. Since the allegations are untrue and absurd I have filed a defamation suit against a prominent national daily where such cooked up stories about me were first published.

I was deeply hurt by senior opposition leaders alleging that I was "an ordinary student with no mentionable assets." The leaders had not cared to follow my academic and family background before levelling such wild accusations. I have studied in three of the most prestigious institutions of the country: Doon School in Dehradun, St. Stephen's College, New Delhi and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad where admission is based solely on merit. Moreover, I come from an affluent family which owns substantial areas of land in Haryana besides a flying training school.

I think it is my being the son-in-law of Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal which has aroused suspicions among a section of the people. I am an ambitious entrepreneur whose endeavour is to make his industry flourish. Rather than being an advantage, I have often found my association with the chief minister a hindrance since bureaucrats and government servants always tended to go by the rules of the book where I was concerned and were afraid to use their discretionary powers. The unwarranted scrutiny of my applications have been frustrating but in the long run I found such a gesture beneficial since my dealings would then be above criticism.

The opposition leaders have also wrongly stated that my family members have, within a short period of time, set up 25 industrial units in Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. I have not even heard of some of the industries named in the memorandum while others have been abandoned at the initial stages owing to non issue of licences by the state or

central governments.

The allegation that the Haryana Financial Corporation (HFC) mortgaged the same piece of land over and over again and advanced loans against it more than once is absolutely false. The fact is that loans were only advanced against land which was free from any encumbrances. This can be verified from the records with the *tehsildar* at Hissar and the HFC. The loans which were sanctioned to me were done so in accordance with the norms and procedures and no favour was ever shown to me in the matter. Bhajan Lal has nothing to do with the sanctioning of the loans. Moreover, the allegation that several nationalised banks have shown undue favour to the Bhanu concerns by sanctioning loans for working capital is also unfounded. The banks have set norms for the disbursement of loans and the financial institutions have verified my credit worthiness before sanctioning capital advances. Bhajan Lal has nothing to do with my transactions.

No favour has been shown to me by the Haryana State Electricity Board in granting adequate power to my concerns or my residence. In fact, I have installed generators in all my factories to supplement the

inadequate power supply. I have even provided land free of cost to the electricity board to set up a sub station from which other young entrepreneurs derive benefit.

A furor has also been raised regarding the import of a furnace by the Bhanu concern. The import was in accordance with the import rules and a letter of credit was established through the bank in favour of the suppliers M/S Radyne Ltd of UK against a valid import licence. The payment was made by the Indian bank against the documents and the bill of lading. The furnace was cleared at the Bombay port after proper verification and payment of customs duties. The allegation that there was a false invoice is baseless as similar furnaces have been imported by others at lower prices as well.

Regarding the sanction of subsidies to my concerns I would like to inform my critics that subsidies are given for all backward areas identified by the central government. All subsidies granted are in accordance with the norms and procedures of assessment, sanction and disbursement. No deviation has been made by the Haryana government in granting me subsidies nor has Bhajan Lal anything to do with these matters. Equally baseless is the accusation that the state government has flaunted all norms in granting a licence for the setting up of a distillery. I have obtained all the necessary permissions, no objection certificates and excise licence before embarking on the project.

I have also found the allegation that I used Bhajan Lal's official telephone to advance my business interests shocking. Whenever I used the Haryana Bhawan's telephone in New Delhi I have paid the bills.

While it is not possible to isolate myself from Bhajan Lal I wish to make it clear that my relation with the chief minister is strictly on a personal level and has nothing to do with my business interests. The charges of corruption levelled against me by the opposition leaders are totally false.



Anoop Bishnoi

'I Owe Everything to the Congress'

A.R. Antulay, former Maharashtra chief minister, told SUNDAY

There were flowers everywhere: pink gladiolis, red roses, yellow roses and white daisies. There were flowers in baskets of all shapes and sizes, garlands of varying sizes, and even an arrangement of two roses arranged in the 'V' for victory sign. And there were people everywhere. Among them were the widow of former minister Abbasahab Parvekar, Nevriti Kare, sarpanch of Watar, N.G. Patil from Vita in Sangli district, Sampatrao Ghorpade of Nandgaon taluka, Suresh Pawar, president, All India Backward Class Bank Employees Welfare Association (State Bank unit) and Post Karmachari members, who had been bringing in the flood of telegrams. They were there to congratulate A.R.

Antulay who had been acquitted of charges of corruption and abuse of power in one of the two private criminal complaints filed against him. Crowds were tonic for Mr Antulay, who once again looked his dashing self, with none of the strain of the last four years showing on him. Today, though he is cautious, his mind is made up: he will soon plunge into mainstream politics which to him can be in no other political party than the Congress(I). What about his own group, the Bharatiya Congress Party? How does he see his future? Mr Antulay had to literally play hide-and-seek with his admirers, who came from almost every district of the state, in order to answer these queries.

A.R. Antulay: return to the Congress fold?



Q : Your ideas on politics and Rajiv Gandhi seems to have changed in the last six months? What made you change?

A : There are three or four factors that I have to explain in the context of my contesting the elections as a Bharatiya Congress candidate. That will answer your questions. For this I have to tell you the sequence of events which made it imperative for me to contest the elections.

The then Governor of Maharashtra had given sanction to prosecute me and this was exploited by the opposition to say that if Mr Antulay was not corrupt then the Governor would not have given the sanction. Secondly, the Congress Parliamentary Board (CPB) had early last year taken a decision to amend the Prevention of Corruption Act only to say that "no complaint can be lodged in a court of law against any public servant including a chief minister and an MLA, unless the offence is investigated by the police, as in the case of every other offence, and then the chargesheet can be filed. Even in the matter of a private complaint, the complainant should request the trial judge to direct the police authorities to make a full investigation after which the report would be submitted to the judge by the police and the complainant would proceed with the complaint." Looking in retrospect was it not a fair amendment? It did not rule out a private complaint on the part of a private citizen. The private complainant would have the benefit of investigation at state expense with the state machinery and unlike in a government prosecution the complainant would have the benefit of his own decision to continue the prosecution and not withdraw it. Thirdly, maybe in a state prosecution, a case with clinching evidence can be withdrawn under various pressures and has in fact, been withdrawn (as in the case of George Fernandes and the Baroda Dynamite case). The private complainant is free to continue without any pressure. This fair amendment, which would have been a proud piece of legislation in the interest of enforcing law and administration of justice.

was opposed. As a result the decision of the CPB had to be rescinded. The matter did not end there. I had requested the then chief minister, Vasantdada Patil to bring such an amendment and he refused. More than two-thirds of the Congress legislators gave a notice to the legislative secretariat to move an amendment to the above effect. The opposition in connivance with Vasantdada Patil raised their voice against this legislative right of private members to move any Bill they wanted. Vasantdada Patil was too willing to declare that there would be a whip, as a result of which every member of the Congress(I) would have to vote against the Bill.

In the face of all this, the only conclusion I reached was that the opposition, perhaps, without giving up its right to prosecute me without any investigation whatsoever, were dead against me because they believed that I had developed a vested interest in the Pratisthans and did not want me to have any influence in any of these institutions. Consequently, I wrote to all opposition leaders asking them to make every conceivable suggestion in regard to the constitution, composition and activities of the trusts. That included me quitting from all the Pratisthans if it would satisfy them. None of them acknowledged the letters. I reminded them, but there was no effect. Thereafter I wrote to chief minister Vasantdada Patil to move a Bill for taking over the Pratisthans on the lines of the Siddhi Vinayak temple, which I, when I was chief minister, had taken over. Having found that even this voluntary offer was rejected, I moved a Bill as a private member to enable the government to take over the Pratisthans as government trusts as it was done in the case of the Pandharpur temple (when Mr Antulay was law minister). The opposition in one voice opposed the Bill moved by me as a private member and called upon the government not to support the measure. I had no option but to withdraw the Bill for which I had given notice. Then I resigned as trustee from all the trusts. Today, I am not even an ordinary member.

Against this background there were two alternatives left to me and no third, to clear myself of the charges of the so-called corrupt image (I was supposed to have). I had to go to the people and get my name cleared and I had to fight the case in court, in two public prosecutions, to prove my innocence.

In the middle of the court cases, the elections were announced. In this context I had two options, either to

remain in the Congress and fight shy of facing the people or get out of the Congress and contest the elections and prove to the world my standing among the people and my image in the eyes of the electorate who are sovereign. The dictates of my conscience prompted me to opt for the second, in consonance with my self-respect and dignity. Having chosen the latter, I am no fool not to foresee the consequences of contesting the elections as an independent, namely of being expelled from the Congress(I).

Q: At that time you were upset with the Prime Minister whom you are praising today.

A: In retrospect I do not blame Rajiv Gandhi for not having given me a ticket. The then chief minister paid my deposit and that of Y.B. Chavan, in the MPCC(I) as I had not applied for the ticket and consequently did not pay the deposit. At the state election committee meeting, in full view of everybody Dada took out cash from his pocket and paid the deposit to the then president Prof. N.M. Kamble. But he could not make me sign the application for the ticket and he could not have



I did believe then and I do believe now, that it was a trap by the then chief minister (Vasantdada Patil) and his henchmen to malign me and hold me to public ridicule by making defamatory statements in Delhi that the party would lose in the state if I got a ticket

signed for me. Till today there is no application by me on the records of the Congress of having asked for a ticket. To put the same thing differently, I was given the ticket without asking for it. I was given the ticket by the then chief minister paying the deposit for me. Against the series of events you can appreciate my vexation after Vasantdada Patil had made a statement in Delhi that if Mr Antulay was given a ticket all seats would be lost to the Congress in Maharashtra.

I did believe then and I do believe now, that it was a trap by the then chief minister and his henchmen to malign me and hold me to public ridicule by making defamatory statements in Delhi that the party would lose in the state if I got a ticket. What I had expected then was the intervention of the Prime Minister.

Q: Why did you expect Rajiv Gandhi to intervene on your behalf?

A: Unfortunately he could not find time to meet me though I waited for three days. I could have explained to him the facts I told you and which he was unaware of. Knowing me as he does, namely as a person unlike Dada who is a fair-weather friend, he should have found five minutes from his extremely busy schedule to see me since I had to fight Dada, Y.B. Chavan and Sharad Pawar, only because I had opposed them and sided with Indira Gandhi during the days when these and many others like them left her in the lurch though they had basked in the glory of her power.

My seniority in the party as a Congressman demanded better treatment, at that time, than was meted out to me, namely before the announcement of the first batch of nominees of the Congress(I) in Maharashtra, from which my name was missing I should have been called and told that as in the Rajya Sabha elections, we do not want to give you a ticket for certain reasons. He should not have left me to read about it in the newspapers. This is the minimum courtesy I expected from my own leader for whom my loyalty was never in question. The cumulative effect of all this was taking undue advantage of the Prime Minister who was hard pressed for time, immediately in the wake of the cruel assassination of Mrs Gandhi and who was confronted with numerous national and international problems, and the formidable task of successfully conducting national elections. The then chief minister, Dada, and some of his friends in Delhi did misinform and poison the Prime Minister's mind about my stand on the issue of going before the

people in order to get their verdict which would resultantly benefit the image of both the party and the Prime Minister himself. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister's busy schedule was taken full advantage of by my detractors within the party and opponents without. Even so, it is my belief that the Prime Minister did want to give me a fair deal. Unfortunately, facts were not allowed to reach his ears. If he was not well-disposed to me personally he would not have felt compelled to make a public statement extending to me full support on behalf of the party in fighting the court cases then pending against me, and let me assure you that he was as good as his word.

Q: If the Prime Minister supported you in your court case how is it that Shalini Patil deposed as witness against you and Dada worked against you?

A: Indeed that proves my point that unfortunately Dada had succeeded in bringing some evil influence on Rajiv Gandhi by keeping him in the dark about the real facts and painting a gloomy picture of my personality and activities and a rosy picture about his "loyalty, dedication and devotion and selfless service" to him and the party. There have been many. I have quoted only the most relevant. I was the only person then exposing Dada. Today, the whole world knows him and I am happy my stand has been fully vindicated. So far as my knowledge goes, the Prime Minister himself has been badly let down by Dada who betrayed his confidence and Rajiv Gandhi has been constrained to ask for scrutiny of many of the papers of the innumerable shady deals from Sangli to Dharavi.

In conclusion, I would say that I have fought cases and fought elections. I have done so not because of the opposition but in spite of them. For all practical purposes, they are treating me as a Congressman and have never reconciled to the idea that I contested against both of them. In my humble opinion I have proved my point and my political and administrative actions stand fully vindicated both in the people's forum as well as by the judicial tribunal. When the question was put recently to me as to whether I would join the Congress(I), did they expect me to say that I would be permitting myself to live a political life on the mercies of the opposition parties who have put their last drop of energies into destroying me socially, politically and personally? Did they expect that like many leaders of the opposition I would look at the achievements of

Rajiv Gandhi with jaundiced eyes? If that was their expectation it is wrong. Some people are trying by all means to create a situation, having almost failed in their efforts at litigation, in which I am politically isolated so that I am rendered ineffective as far as the people whom I have the honest desire to serve are concerned. I am glad that I owe nothing to any opposition party or leader and my conscience is clear. I am equally proud that I owe everything to the Congress of which I have been a humble worker all my life.

You can say, to use a rural simile, that what I did at the fag end of November and December last year, was to organise a separate kitchen under the same roof and in the same house. It was only to get over a period of misunderstanding, so that one did not have to say that the prodigal had returned.

I am already home. I've always regarded myself as a Congressman and am proud to hold myself out as a Congressman of the Nehru brand. That is precisely why, even after Nehru was no more I sided with Indiraji and not with Yashwantraoji. It was I, who was the first chief minister to publicly invite Rajiv Gandhi to take part in political activity



I should have been called and told that as in the Rajya Sabha elections, we do not want to give you a ticket for certain reasons. He (Rajiv Gandhi) should not have left me to read about it in the newspapers. This is the minimum courtesy I expected

after Sanjayji's tragic demise and it was I again who requested him personally to contest from Amethi which was rendered vacant after Sanjay Gandhi's death. I could not have been conceivably opposed to Rajiv Gandhi personally. The dispute was with Dada, the chief minister, and after his unceremonious exit differences as far as I am concerned have ceased.

Q: But Dada and his friends in Delhi are still around. Don't you think there will be opposition to your rejoining mainstream politics, which you say can only be done through the Congress(I)?

A: I did say that Dada, with the help of friends in Delhi, did do a lot of harm to me, both politically and in matters of criminal litigation. But I never said those friends are members of the high command. Indeed I have complained against no members of the high command. If these friends were members of the high command then whatever was done against me would have looked perfectly ethical, politically and morally. But precisely my grievance is that they are not genuine Congressmen of any consequence, but hangers-on that are to be found around the seat of power, irrespective of who the occupant is.

Q: How can inconsequential persons affect and influence the high command against you?

A: These people of no consequence become effective because they are used as weapons by powerful persons of a powerful state. As you know poison can be used both as an agent of destruction and also construction depending upon who is using it, a physician or a psychopath.

Q: Do you think the Prime Minister is not aware of these people?

A: With his robust common sense, which he has brought in looking at every problem confronting the nation and every matter concerning the organisation, the Prime Minister has certainly, by now, come to know who's who of the Congress and the country.

Q: Are you planning to meet Rajiv Gandhi?

A: I have a few matters on my agenda, as a citizen and a political worker of 41 years standing, to discuss with him. But today in the midst of the situation that he's facing, which goes to the roots of national integration and unity of the country, I do not think that the matters I want to discuss can wait for some more time, although I have to express my considered views on these major problems also.

Interviewed by Olga Tellez, Bombay

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Will the Akalis be Allowed to Win?

Despite the Congress(I) putting up weak candidates against the Akali Dal, the 25 September polls will be no cakewalk in view of the terrorists' threat

Pace has not returned to Punjab and the scars of the years of violence have not healed fully. The sound of gunfire can still be heard and bloodshed continues. The terrorists, though their ranks have been depleted, are still active. Today, they are no longer indiscriminate; they are picking and choosing their victims with care. While they are determined not to let law and order come back to Punjab, the people are determined to go to polls. At stake are not only the 117 Assembly seats and the 13 Lok Sabha seats but also the government's ability to bring back peace and prosperity to the state.

The important political parties in the state, the Akali Dal (L) and the Congress(I), have already begun their preparations for the 25 September polls. While the pre-poll atmosphere remains subdued, the characteristic horse-trading before party lists are announced have been intense. This was especially apparent in the case of the Akali Dal (Longowal). The infighting which began soon after Sant Longowal's death, continued till the names of the party's candidates were announced on the day of the *bhog* ceremony of Sant Longowal on 1 September. And, when the dust raised by the intra-party struggle for supremacy finally settled, it was clear that the group comprising Surjit Singh Barnala, the acting president of the Akali Dal, Balwant Singh, Capt. Amrinder Singh, the former maharaja of Patiala, Ravi Inder Singh and their supporters had emerged as the strongest bloc with around 50 nominations. The other group led by Prakash Singh Badal succeeded in getting about 20 tickets while 15 seats were left for the pro-Gurcharan Singh Tohra lobby in the Akali Dal. Nine seats were left for the Janata Party to contest. The rest were given to independents.

Perhaps, one of the Akali Dal leaders who has suffered most due to the infighting is Prakash Singh Badal, former chief minister of Punjab. One of the shrewdest of the senior Akali



A black dungaree-clad commando keeps vigil outside the room where a closed-door meeting was held between Governor Arjun Singh and S.S. Barnala at Longowal village



S.S. Barnala flanked by armed bodyguards arriving at the *bhog* ceremony of Sant Longowal

leaders, Badal has been left to fend for himself. In the Legislative Assembly elections, he faces a strong Congress(I) nominee, Jagmeet Singh Brar, in the Giddarbaha constituency while other Akali Dal leaders are pitted against comparative lightweights. Today, Badal is apprehensive that certain sections in the Akali Dal may try to put their weight behind Jagmeet Singh Brar. To add to the dissension in the party, a number of prominent Akali Dal(L) leaders who were close to Longowal have been denied tickets. Among them are Surjan Singh Thekedar, Jiwan Singh Umaranangal, Jathedar Tota Singh, Gurnam Singh "Tir," Gurdarshan Singh Grewal and Manjit Singh Khaira. Interestingly, the Akali Dal has maintained its tradition of giving a ticket to the chauffeur of a senior leader. This time Longowal's chauffeur, Gobind Singh Kanjala, has been nominated by the party to contest from Sherpur in Sangrur district.

The Punjab polls will find the Congress(I) in a difficult position. While it cannot go out of its way to seek a direct confrontation with the Akalis, it has also the task of retaining its position in the state. Today, the Congress(I) in its efforts to ensure that the accord with the Akalis

is implemented, according to Punjab-watchers, has virtually decided to give a walk-over to the Akali Dal. But senior Congress(I) leaders have decided to conduct a low-key political campaign and have vehemently denied that their party has taken such a stand. Kamalapati Tripathi, the party's working president, has claimed that the Congress(I) has no intention of letting the Akalis win majority. In fact, he was hopeful of his party's return to power. The AICC(I) general secretary, Shrikant Verma, was even more emphatic. "The polling booth," he said, "is hardly the place for a political party to commit hara-kiri."

But despite such stout denials there are lingering doubts about whether the Congress(I) is putting its best foot forward. Of the 117 persons who have been given party tickets, there are 80 new faces comprising youngsters, women and unknown personalities. The Congress(I) has put up lightweights against senior Akali leaders. Till the Congress(I) list was announced, few people in the state or even in the party had heard of Hardip Kumar Goel who is contesting against S.S. Barnala. Neither had anyone heard of Sudesh Kumar Sharma or Brij Bhupinder

Singh. While Sudesh Kumar has been pitted against Ravi Inder Singh at Morinda, Brij Bhupinder Singh has been put up against Balwant Singh at Lohian. Among other leaders, whose nominees have been disregarded are President Zail Singh and Darbara Singh. Santokh Singh Randhawa, former president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee(I), has been denied a ticket mainly because of his alleged links with terrorists. Senior party leader Harcharan Singh Brar has also been denied a nomination though his wife and daughter have been allotted tickets.

So strong has been the resentment over the allotment of tickets in the Congress(I), that Gurdial Singh Saini who has subsequently resigned from the party, organised a procession of his supporters. In fact, he even tried to prevent Lt Gen. Rajinder Singh Sparrow (Retd) from filing his nomination papers. Saini went to the extent of making a derogatory speech accusing the Congress(I) of not giving him a ticket even though he had been a terrorist's victim.

The Congress(I) had denied tickets to Basant Singh, nephew of Zail Singh and Ram Singh political secretary of Zail Singh. In the Darbara Singh camp apart from Santokh Singh Randhawa, Harcharan Singh

The Long Trail of Blood

9 September 1981: Lala Jagat Narain, editor-in-chief of Hind Samachar publications, is assassinated.

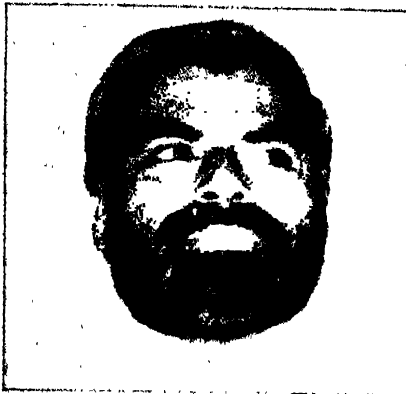
15 April 1983: Deputy inspector general of police A.S. Atwal is shot dead just outside the main gate of Golden Temple.

14 October 1983: Explosions in cinema houses in Delhi and at a railway station kill five persons.

21 October 1983: Seventeen persons are killed when the Jammu Tawi-Calcutta express train is derailed by extremists near Ludhiana.

20 February 1984: Sumeet Singh, editor of *Preet Lari*, a Punjabi weekly, is shot dead by extremists.

28 March 1984: The president of the



Arjun Das

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Harbans Singh Manchanda, is killed in New Delhi.

2 April 1984: Harbans Lal Khanna, a former Punjab MLA and BJP leader is murdered in Chandigarh.

3 April 1984: Prof. V.N. Tiwari, MP is shot dead by Sikh extremists in Chandigarh.

15 April 1984: More than 35 railway stations set on fire in Punjab.

12 May 1984: Romesh Chander, chief editor of Hind Samachar publications and son of the late Lala Jagat Narain, is killed in Jalandhar.

31 October 1984: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in New Delhi.

24 March 1985: K.L. Manchanda, general secretary of the BJP's Chandigarh unit, is murdered.

19 April 1985: Mr Raghunandan Lal Bhatia, AICC general secretary is shot at and wounded in Amritsar.

10 May 1985: The Punjab Lok Dal president, Balbir Singh is shot dead in Hoshiarpur.

10 and 11 May 1985: Nearly 100 persons are killed in different parts of northern India by booby trapped transistors.

23 June 1985: Altogether 329 persons



Sumeet Singh



Lalit Maken

travelling in Kanishka, the Air India Jumbo, are killed as the plane crashes into the sea. A bomb planted in the aircraft by Sikhs is believed to have caused the crash.

31 July 1985: Congress(I) MP and trade union leader Lalit Maken, his wife Gitanjali and a Congress worker, Balkishen Khanna, shot dead at the Maken's Kirti Nagar residence.

20 August 1985: Akali Dal president, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, is shot dead in a gurdwara near Sangrur.

4 September 1985: Arjun Das, a Congress(I) metropolitan councillor and a close associate of the late Sanjay Gandhi, is shot dead outside his shop in Laxmibai Nagar.



Sant Longowal

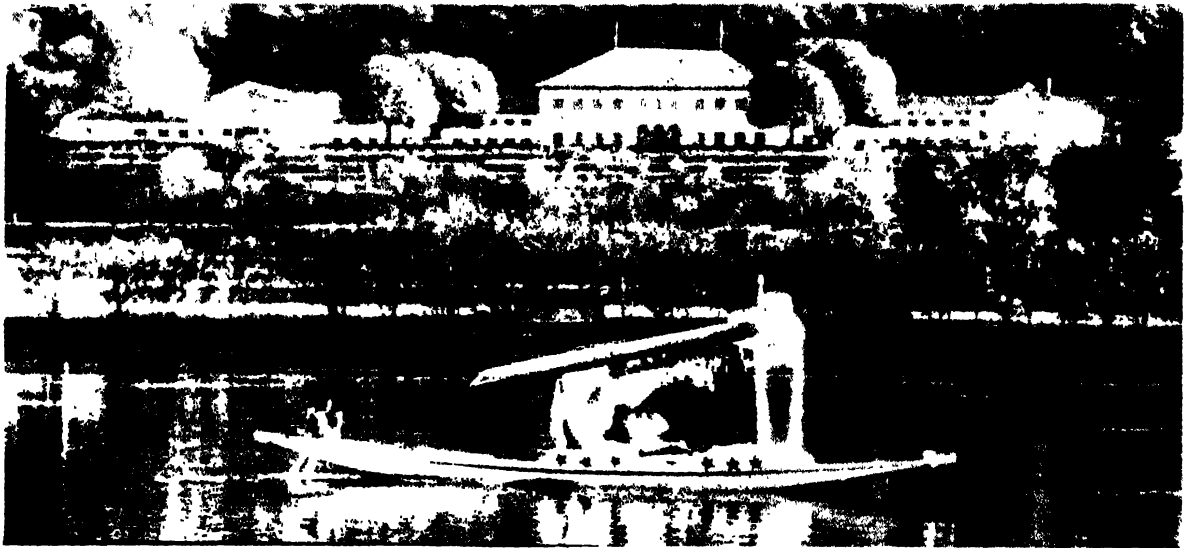


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SPECIAL REPORT

Ajnala, Birpal Singh and Bhagwan Das have not been given tickets. Darbara Singh's favourites like Chaudhary Darshan Singh and Ram Lal Chitti too have been excluded from the list for the first time in the last two decades. The Congress(I) and the Akalis are contesting the election without their familiar partners—the CPI and the CPI(M) respectively. The left is contesting unitedly for a change. At least 15 Congress and Akali Dal rebels are also in the fray apart from the BJP.

The faction of the Akali Dal led by militant leader J S Talwandi has however, been caught on the wrong foot. Till Baba Joginder Singh the "United" Akali Dal chief announced his decision to boycott the elections, his followers had expected to take part in the polls. The Talwandi faction had even asked the members of the Dam Dama Taksal (an organisation Bhindranwale belonged to) for their help and released its list of candidates after a meeting of its five-member board in Ludhiana. But on 4 September, the party convenor Randhir Singh Cheema suddenly announced the party's decision to boycott the polls. Leaders of the Talwandi faction are afraid that if they break ranks with "United" Akali Dal and take part in the elections, they and not the Akali Dal(L) candidates will be the main targets of the terrorists.

While the political parties are gearing up for the polls, a fresh wave of violence and an increase in the activities of the terrorists has brought in an element of instability in the state. The state administration, however, has been able to handle the situation so far. But a lot is at



Plainclothes securitymen keep vigil on VIPs—S S Barnala, V P Singh and Arjun Singh

stake, because a breakdown in the poll machinery would mean a victory for the terrorists. In fact the violence has already claimed half a dozen lives. On 3 September, the terrorists struck at six different places in the state.

According to intelligence sources, the terrorists are likely to step up their activities even further. Their aim is to stop the elections. The government on its part, has provided more than 80,000 securitymen for the elections. The Election Commis-

sion has advised candidates to restrict their public appearances. It has also suggested that each candidate is given the opportunity to appear on television and speak on the radio in order to avoid exposure as much as possible.

The Akali Dal acting chief Surjit Singh Barnala adopted a unique technique while distributing party tickets. All aspirants were made to sign a document supporting the "Punjab accord." Even critics of the accord like Prakash Singh Badal were left with no choice but to sign it. The Akali Dal (L) was approached by a number of United Akali Dal members for tickets. But the Akali Dal (L) was more keen on a merger. Observers feel that including defectors would have proved fatal for the Akali Dal.

Besides the 80,000 security personnel, a 40,000 strong force will be rushed to Punjab to maintain law and order. The Punjab government has also decided to raise a 16,000 strong home guards force. In the meantime the number of preventive arrests has risen to 575. Altogether 12,704 polling stations are to be set up and over six lakh securitymen will be on duty. The state government has ordered all policemen except those doing intelligence work to wear uniforms all the time even if they are off duty.



Anxious ticket-seekers at the Akali Dal(L) office at Longowal village

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

"Sri Lanka Plans a Genocide of Tamils"

S.C. Chandrachud told Anita Pratap

Q Why do you think the Indian government deported you?

A: No reason was given to me when I was deported. I asked the chief immigration officer in Madras whether there were any reasons for my deportation. He said the government need not give any reason. But when I was in the United States, Mr Bajpai made a remark that I was a "thorn in the flesh" in the Thimphu negotiations. Also, the suggestion that I could be out of India for a period of about six weeks—later he checked back with Delhi and said two months—and then come back to India indicates that they felt they should get rid of some of the persons who took a hardline on the Eelam demand. My only conclusion is that they don't want obstacles when they are going to put through whatever proposal they arrive at with the Sri Lanka government.

Q: I understand that you were opposed to both the ceasefire and the Thimphu talks.

A: That is correct. First we felt that the cease-fire at this particular moment was going to be a great advantage to the Sri Lanka government and a disadvantage to the Tamil side. As far as the military part of the cease-fire is concerned I am not competent to comment, but I may say that the militants had reorganised themselves into a united front, the four active groups that have formed the ENLF and were becoming much more effective. If they had kept up that pace they would have made tremendous progress and the fabric of Sri Lankan society would have collapsed. Therefore the cease-fire came at the wrong time. The Sri Lankan government at the time was not ready to meet the military challenge posed by the ENLF.

The second and important aspect



Chandrachud: India has done a lot

was that we noticed that the Sri Lanka government was getting a lot of money from the western countries. There were many human rights activists all over the world who felt that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka was one of the worst in the world and that they should do something to save it. Jayewardene wanted to push in the cease-fire before the Aid Consortium met in Paris on 24 June. The countries that pledge aid demand certain conditions like peace and stability before they give aid. Jayewardene was very keen to have the cease-fire accord in hand so that he could claim peace and stability in Sri Lanka and thereby succeed in getting aid. Human rights activists like us were trying to block this aid. Jayewardene has done this many times. When some aid was to be pledged for the Mahaweli project development, he started on the development council proposals. After

he got the aid commitments he saw to it that the development councils did not work. I was quite convinced by my past experiences with Jayewardene that he would cheat us on this score. If the cease-fire was announced it would be the end of our attempts to persuade the aid-giving countries to stop giving aid.

As far as the Thimphu talks are concerned, we have had so many opportunities to talk to Jayewardene and try to settle this problem. I believe that the process of negotiations needs a lot of give and take but the basic principle is that the person must be interested in settling the problem. Jayewardene doesn't want to resolve the problem. He will use it (negotiations) as a means to take advantage and continue with whatever he wants to do. Jayewardene so far has had so many opportunities to talk to the Tamils. I think he needn't even talk to the Tamils because he knows exactly what the Tamils want. And he also knows the extent to which the average Sinhalese will be willing to go (not the extremists). India can take the horse to the river but can't make it drink. So the process of negotiations will not be of any use but will only allow Jayewardene to gain time. The Jayewardene government was not ready to meet the military challenge of the four united groups. He was taken aback when they got together. His calculation was that they would never unite.

Q: Weren't you unhappy that the Indian government did not consult the militants regarding the cease-fire accord?

A: I was unhappy that the militants had not been consulted on the cease-fire because in that process the government of India would have been able to get sufficient information and material to work out a ceasefire which would have been lasting or

Jayewardene doesn't want to resolve the problem...India can take the horse to the river but can't make it drink. So the process of negotiations will not be of any use but will only allow Jayewardene to gain time

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which would have been effective. Take the example of the regulation by which dead bodies can be dispersed without an inquest. This was announced in June 1983. When it was announced, Mrs Gandhi took the extreme step of expressing concern and this resulted in the Jayewardene government unleashing violence even against the Indian embassy staff in July 1983. Despite all that, Mrs Gandhi maintained that a genocide of Tamils was going on in Sri Lanka. The legalisation of this genocide was the regulation permitting the disposal of dead bodies without inquest. Even this provision has not been removed before the cease-fire was agreed upon. This is only one example. There are so many other problems—if that provision was removed and the old law which required an inquiry before a body could be disposed was restored then these killings, which finally broke the talks, would never have taken place. So in other words it is the government of India, or its agencies that worked out this cease-fire who didn't do their initial homework. The talks finally broke down because they didn't do their homework. They didn't obtain the proper conditions that could ensure the effectiveness of the cease-fire, because they didn't consult the necessary people and because it was imposed upon them.

Now they (Indian agencies) are trying to take it out on the militants — this is actually what has happened. Even the telescoping of this whole process has been a tremendous disadvantage. After phase one of Thimphu, the militants and government authorities were to meet and supervise the ceasefire to see the way it was working. So if the first meeting was only about the supervision of the cease-fire they would have realised that the troops had gone into the barracks in the northern peninsula but in the other areas they were not in the barracks. There were so many steps that the government of Sri Lanka was taking that indicated that they were now getting ready for another cease-fire. At that point of time these cease-fire violations would have come up for discussion and the government of India would have immediately brought the situation under control and prevented this massacre.

Perhaps in their (India's) anxiety to rush through this they telescoped everything and started talking about the proposals. In order to get the militants to agree to adopt the new strategy, they had to twist their arms. And so the militants are now inaccessible. And, on the other hand the Sri Lanka government was tremendously encouraged and were sticking on obstinately to a position that even the government of India

tabilised. Even if this negotiating process brings forth the benefit of a cessation of violence and ensures the protection of innocent civilians from the attacks by the armed forces of Sri Lanka that will be an advantage. Beyond this I don't expect the process to achieve much — but even this achievement is pretty good.

Q: Do you think the deportation was meant to serve as a warning to the Tamil militants?



could not justify.

Q: You don't have any faith in negotiations with Jayewardene. In the circumstances what do you consider India's role to be?

A: Yes, I am convinced that a negotiated settlement with Jayewardene is not possible. But we are confronted with a situation where the government of India is working on an initiative. And once the PM of India has started working on this we owe him a duty to see how best we can help in the process. It is not that we believe in it but then our views may be wrong and if we can talk and settle the matter that would perhaps be better. It also has another advantage in that if government of India finds that Jayewardene is intransigent and unreasonable, certainly the government of India has to see what the alternatives are because this problem cannot go on. I don't think India would want to have Ceylon, which is on its southern flank, des-

A: It is a warning. The message is that they don't want us to be firm in our convictions. The message is that we are refugees here and we have to be amenable to persuasion.

Q: After this incident do you honestly believe that relations between the Tamil militants and the government of India can be restored to an even keel?

A: Yes I do believe that. We are the persons who have been affected. And we cannot for a moment forget that so much has been done for us by the government of India. This is something very personal as far as we are concerned. We are clear that none of us there will change our views because of the deportation. So once it is revoked we will go ahead as if it never happened. In the process they have stimulated the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu, why even the whole country, to show a solidarity with the Eelam Tamils. Though the whole of India may not agree

When he (Romesh Bhandari) goes to Colombo and uses the facilities made available by Jayewardene, who represents one of the warring groups in the ethnic conflict, it creates certain misgivings among the Tamils

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with our right to self-determination and need for a separate state, yet they feel that we are the oppressed.

Q: After this incident do you think the Tamils can speak fearlessly on Indian soil?

A: My view is that they are entitled to express themselves freely and they should. But I do notice that there are great apprehensions about the possibility of them being harassed. You see what happens is that when the government of India is aware of the arm-twisting and does nothing to stop it, then every policeman on the street can misbehave because he thinks he can get away with it. I think in the process they are suppressing the free expression of the views of the Eelam Tamils. That damage has been done. I think the government must do something to rectify this damage.

Q: Do the Tamils experience a crisis of confidence regarding Romesh Bhandari?

A: Yes, they do and this is because of a number of things, especially the statements he had made as to what the Tamils can expect. He has in a parrot-like manner repeated what the Jayewardene government is willing to give. When he says that the Tamils can't expect anything more and repeats to the Tamils the arguments the Jayewardene government unreasonably puts forward, it makes the Tamils feel that he is partisan. He may not actually be partisan but he gives the impression of being partisan. Also when he goes to Colombo and uses the facilities made available by Jayewardene who represents one of the warring groups in the ethnic conflict, it creates certain misgivings among the Tamils. Whenever G. Parthasarathy went to Colombo he would strictly use the facilities of only the Indian government.

Q: What do you have to say about Bhandari's confrontation with Satyendra?

A: That was unfortunate. Being an experienced person he should have realised that the problem was that the cease-fire was not working. Instead of pressurising Tamil groups he should have gone into the cause of the break in talks and rectified that. Moreover, Jayewardene had given an undertaking to Mr Gandhi that he would provide sufficient autonomy to the Tamils. The proposals which were put forward at Thimphu are an

insult to Mr Gandhi who started the process of negotiations on the basis of Jayewardene's assurances.

Q: Do you think one of the problems is Mr Bhandari's inadequate knowledge of the complexities of the ethnic crisis?

A: Yes. I do think so because the reports we have had indicate that his exposure to the Tamil problem is insufficient and he is also taking an approach that prevents him from looking into the past records. This 'new' approach is, I feel, inappropriate in these circumstances.

Q: Both you and Balasingham have sent letters to the PM reaffirming your faith in him. Has this been contrived by the Indian government as a sort of a face-saving gimmick?

encouraged as a result of the deportation orders. Various people there were gloating over the issue. It only convinced us that the unfortunate incident had reaffirmed Sri Lanka's confidence in the genocidal destruction of Tamils and that perhaps they could do it with India's blessings.

Q: Why is it that most of the other Tamil groups distrust you and go to the extent of calling you a CIA agent in their ranks?

A: Some in the militant groups are engaged in a whisper campaign against me. Nobody has so far confronted me and sought a clarification for any of my activities. The Sri Lanka government has called me



Chandrasekaran with wife after returning to Madras



A: I was not asked to give any letters. I did it on my own initiative. It was done to soften the impact of the whole thing and the Indian government is not to be blamed for it. We realise that and we don't want this to be an impediment. We should not allow a gap to develop between the Tamils and Mr Gandhi. I would have said the same thing even if he had sent me to the torturers in Sri Lanka.

Q: Were you also keen to avert any sort of confrontation with India because it would have been exploited by Sri Lanka?

A: Yes that is true. The Sri Lankan government had been tremendously

publicly a KGB agent and sometimes an agent of the Indian intelligence agencies. I am totally against a Marxist set-up being imposed on Eelam. There are also some ultra Marxists or Marxist-Leninists who without any mass support are trying to push through their beliefs in the national liberation movement. I have always believed that Eelam has to be a democratic state. We don't want a Marxist Jayewardene in Eelam. These whisper campaigns are directed against people who will stand up against them and whom they cannot trample in a democratic set-up. As for the moderates (TULF) it is not a question of hostility. I have

When the militants take control of the territory we would expect India to recognise us. That would take us a long way towards getting world recognition

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never sought power, in fact, I have avoided it. But the moderates realise that I am a potential threat with mass backing. I have done all I can to assure them that I don't intend to compete with them—my interest is human rights not politics. I have also differed with them on our stance vis-a-vis the militants a few years ago. At one of the meetings in Ceylon I criticised Mr Amirthalingam for condemning the acts of the militants because they are also struggling for the same cause. We believed in one method and they believed in another. Both can exist. I believed that the militants had a role to play and I have been justified. I made statements at the US conference that we cannot continue this struggle

to such an extent that India cannot prevent it in any other way than by military intervention. When the situation reaches a point where the militants can take control of the territory we would expect India to recognise us. That would take us a long way in getting world recognition. What I feel is that if there is finally a military intervention by India, the legal formation of the state of Eelam can be handled by the matter being handed over to the United Nations which can be requested to hold a plebiscite among the Tamil people whether they want to exercise their right to self-determination and exist as a separate entity. Such a process will give legitimacy to the state of Eelam.

origin and a large number of Indian citizens. If that happens the government of India is duty-bound to militarily intervene to save them. That situation could occur in the near future.

Q: So you mean India would be justified in intervening militarily only if plantation Tamils or Indian citizens are attacked.

A: Intervention is possible for two reasons: one, on humanitarian grounds because the Sri Lankan Tamils are victims of a genocidal onslaught—the intervention in Bangladesh was justified because of the human rights violations there. Second there is the other principle where India has a right and duty to protect its own citizens. To give a bad example it would be the Grenada principle. As Rajiv Gandhi has ruled out intervention at this juncture, the second principle is what might be applied. The Sri Lanka government would not have hatched such conspiracies if they felt India would not intervene but now they are lulled into a false sense of security that India will not come in militarily.

Q: What have you learnt most from your deportation experience?

A: Three things. First, one becomes much stronger when one faces challenges. Second, justice always prevails. I am even more convinced today that if I act truthfully according to my convictions I will achieve my goal. The other aspect is what I learnt when I deprived myself of food to protest against the way I was treated by the Tamil Nadu police. They were polite and kind but I noticed that they had scant regard for law. They did not care a fig for the entire legal structure of their country. They had no respect for their own Constitution. I resented that and that is what made me refuse food and water. I sustained it because I felt that I had been wronged by India. I felt they had been wrong in using deportation as a means to change my views. While fasting, I found that my determination was becoming much stronger while my body was becoming weaker. I was reminded of Gandhi's words that when the body becomes weak, the mind becomes stronger. I found that when the Indian officials subtly warned or threatened me that I would be sent to Sri Lanka, where I might face death, I was not afraid. It just did not matter. ■



Chandrasekaran with TULF chief M. Sivasithanparam

from within Ceylon alone. The expatriate community has to be the sheet anchor of our struggle and our real fighting forces are not going to be the moderates but the militants. I felt it was our duty to back these two forces.

Q: What would you expect India's role to be in your goal for Eelam?

A: My view is that India is justified in continuing to champion the cause of the oppressed. It should condemn violations of human rights. Apart from that I don't feel they need to intervene directly in the affairs of Sri Lanka unless there is going to be a general massacre or if the process of the annihilation of Tamils continues

I do expect at some stage, possibly very soon, that the Sri Lankan government would set in motion a genocidal attack on the plantation Tamils of Indian origin. During the last two months for the first time there have been many arrests in the plantations—the type of arrests that are being made in the north and east. This is certainly going to result in greater militant activity in the region on the Tamils' side. I have been informed of a plan by the Sri Lanka government to unleash violence on the plantation Tamils. If that is to take place I do expect a situation where there is going to be a lot of loss of life among the persons of Indian

I have always believed that Eelam has to be a democratic state. We don't want a Marxist Jayewardene in Eelam

A Bloody Vendetta?

Barely a month after Lalit Maken's murder, Arjun Das, Congress(I) councillor in New Delhi, was gunned down by terrorists in broad daylight. Was it an attempt to avenge the anti-Sikh riots of 1984?

It was past evening on 1 September when a Bajaj scooter with three men on it drove past the Ahuja Auto Works at Rajouri Garden, New Delhi. The Sikh youth on the driver's seat turned towards the repair garage and shouted filthy abuses in Punjabi. He whipped out a pistol and raising it high in the air called out: "Mainu aithey goli chalani ai (I have to fire here)." The two clean-shaven youths on the pillion, however, dissuaded him and they drove off. A few minutes later they returned on foot, hung around the garage smoked a cigarette and then sauntered off. By then the commotion had brought people to their doors and shopkeepers closing for the day stopped to have a look.

Three days after the incident, on 4 September, Arjun Das, local Congress(I) leader and member of the Delhi Metropolitan Council, and his bodyguard, a Delhi police constable,

were brutally shot dead in Das's office-cum-car repair garage by a stengun-toting youth. One of his accomplices, armed with a pistol, shot Arjun Das's driver and two women who had come to see the Congress(I) leader. The third aide, a clean-shaven Sikh youth sporting a dark coloured turban, kept the engine of the Bajaj scooter running. The three youths had come to Das's shop on a scooter which was parked only about 30 ft away from the garage. The gruesome deed over, the assassins snatched the service revolver of the bodyguard, Vijinder Singh, before taking off.

Arjun Das had gone to his office situated inside the Arjun Auto Works garage at Laxmibai market around 8.45 am, a little earlier than usual, on 4 September. His driver, 24-year-old Satbir Singh, sat under the shady neem tree outside the garage along with Parvati, a 40-year-

old woman, who had come to see Arjun Das. Mahadevi, a washerwoman from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences too had come to get a letter of recommendation for her son from Mr Das. The 24-year-old bodyguard of Arjun Das, constable Vijinder Singh, who was assigned to him after Lalit Maken's murder, had joined him at 9 am.

At around 9.15 am, two of the three young men who had come to the place on a scooter at about 9.00 am, whipped out a stengun and a pistol and moved towards the office whose shutters had just been pulled up for the day. While the youth carrying the pistol, which was concealed in his crash helmet, fired the first shot at Parvati, Mahadevi and Satbir Singh, the assailant with the stengun rushed into Mr Das's office and pulled the trigger. The first bullets hit Vijinder Singh who was sitting near the office door. The stengun was then turned towards 46-year-old Arjun Das who was sitting on his chair with his personal assistant, Mukesh Bhatt, standing close by. Arjun Das crouched under the chair and then ran under an iron staircase in an attempt to save himself. Shot in the neck, Mukesh, an associate of Arjun Das since 1970, picked up the telephone and tried to call the police. Hearing the gun shots, Baldev Raj, Arjun Das's younger brother who was busy working at the rear end of the garage, looked up. He saw a man firing. He ran into the smoke-filled room from the rear door, only to be hit on the leg by a bullet. Rajendra Upadhyaya, a visitor, was also shot and injured.

Having accomplished his bloody job, the assassin ran out. He slipped twice on the floor which was by now wet with blood. The two armed men ran towards the parked scooter shouting, "Kaam ho gaya (the deed has been done)" and made away towards the nearby flyover. A 70-year-old helper from a neighbouring shop, Shyam Sunder, threw a chair at the fleeing men but it was of no use. The assailants fired in the air to scare away Sher Singh who tried to pursue the light green scooter in his three-wheeler.

The whole operation did not take



Relatives weeping over the body of Arjun Das before the cremation

Sandep Shrivastava

SPECIAL REPORT

more than two minutes. "I heard the shots just a few minutes after I had started work. I had taken a car out for repairs when I heard the shots and looked up. A man was firing at my brother. I cannot describe him because the room was full of smoke. I ran towards the office. I heard Mukesh shouting, 'Police, police,' over the phone and then I saw him collapsing. As I tried to run in I was shot. I hurt my leg and fell. I tried to get up but fell again. I saw *bhaisahib* crouching under the stairs. I pulled him out by the collar. His eyes were wide open and he was breathing slowly. I picked up the phone and called my younger brother Bhim. A crowd had collected outside the garage and there was utter confusion. But no one dared to come in. After about five minutes Bhim turned up, and put *bhaisahib* in an auto rickshaw. Then I don't know what happened. I woke up in hospital," recalled Baldev Raj.

Both Arjun Das and Vijinder Singh were taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), barely two kilometres away, where they were declared dead. Both of them had six bullet injuries each. Arjun Das had been hit in the chest, neck and thigh. At the hospital, Parvati told SUNDAY that she was crossing the road when she saw a young man running. He fired and she was hit on the leg. Mahadevi said that she heard "crackers and wondered who was using them at this time of the year." Then she recalled that she was hit from behind.

The killers have been described by witnesses as those belonging to the 26-30 years age group. One of them is said to be tall. One had a turban but no beard. They reportedly came on a scooter, which according to some was light green and to others grey. They were armed with a stengun and a pistol. From the scene of the crime 29 spent cartridges were recovered. All of them were of 9 mm calibre.

According to Raj Rani Vadhera, she had just seen her husband off to office and was preparing breakfast when she heard the sound of "crackers" and looked out of her first floor flat. "A scooter was standing in front of the Arjun Auto Works. Two young men were rushing out of the office-cum-garage. A Sikh youth in a dark brown turban was holding a revolver while the clean shaven man had a stengun. Both of them sat behind the driver on the scooter and shouted 'kam ho gaya'."

Eyewitnesses the murdered Arjun Das and his bodyguard, Vijinder Singh have reportedly identified photographs of Lal Singh and Bakshish



Policemen guard the office where Arjun Das was shot dead

Singh, wanted terrorists, from out of 300 pictures shown to them. Senior police officials believe that besides Lal Singh and Bakshish Singh, the other two involved in the murder are Talwinder Singh Jinda and Karam Singh Kohli. Lal Singh, Bakshish Singh and Talwinder Singh Jinda are also said to be connected with the killing of Lalit Maken, his wife Gitanjali and Bal-kishan Khanna. Karam Singh Kohli of Ludhiana is regarded as the brain behind the Delhi bomb blasts in May. Both Lal Singh and Kohli carry an award of Rs one lakh each on their heads.

Immediately after Arjun Das's murder, prohibitory orders under Section 144 Cr PC were clamped all over the city and the investigation was handed over to the crime branch of the Delhi police. Arjun Das's assassination made the so-called hit list of the Punjab extremists look all the more sinister for the terrorists seem to be ticking off all those names which figure prominently in the PUDR-PUCL report on the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi last year. "We did not even know that his name was on the hit list," wailed Arjun Das's wife after the cremation. "For the last 15 days he (Arjun Das) had started coming home earlier than usual. He was home by 7 pm every day. He would just stay in his room and always asked if the doors and windows were shut. He never spoke about being on the hit list to me. While going out he would caution us to bolt the doors. He said that he was worried as Lalit Maken's killers had not been caught. The children worried about him but he would scold them and tell them not to fear." Arjun Das had his favourite dish of *dal chawal* breakfast on the fateful day. "I had gone to have the *parathas* but he was in a hurry and said to have them for lunch instead. But he

never came home." His wife recalls that her brother came to meet Arjun Das almost as soon as he left the house. "I rang him up in his office at about 9.10 am. I handed over the phone to my brother. Just as my brother said something there was a noise and no response from the other side. My brother disconnected the line and called up again after a few minutes. Someone picked up the phone and said, 'Yahan goli chal gaye hai. Arjun Dasji ke goli lag gaye hai' (There has been firing here. Arjun Das has been hit)." I rang up my brother-in-law. And, when I reached the hospital it was all over."

Arjun Das shot into prominence because of his closeness to Sanjay Gandhi. In those days, he had a small cycle repair shop in Model Basti. As a cycle mechanic he had an interest in cars too. Sanjay Gandhi, who was looking for young people for his dream car project, was quick to spot the talent in Arjun Das. During the Emergency, Arjun Das became an influential figure. He represented the Laxmibai Nagar constituency in the Metropolitan Council from 1972 to 1977 and was re-elected from the same constituency in 1980. A number of projects were taken up during his years in office. Besides being a member of the AICC, he was also vice-president of the Super Bazar and an active member of the Delhi Flying Club.

Arjun Das was cremated near his office at the Safdarjang Enclave cremation grounds. The funeral procession went round his constituency before reaching the cremation ground where the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi and his wife, Sonia Gandhi, waited along with other VIPs. The body draped in the Congress flag was accompanied by many Congressmen who figure in the hit list. H.K.L. Bhagat walked alongside the body flanked by his securitymen.

Rashmi Saksons, New Delhi

Spies in the Dock

Charges have been framed against Coomar Narain and 16 others
arrested for spying

Coomar Narain walked slowly, as if in great pain, into the Patiala House court. Behind him followed his accomplices and 16 fellow accused in the biggest espionage scandal after independence. "Coomar Narain has lost more than 15 kgs of weight since he was arrested in January," commented one lawyer during the *in camera* proceedings being conducted by additional chief metropolitan magistrate, Bharat Bhushan. But the words of the leader of the spy ring to one of the others accused was more telling. "I am dying slowly. My conscience is

killing me. I am responsible for the destruction of 17 families." Was this the guilt of one who had pilloined the secrets of the country or just the rambling thoughts of a sick man accused of heading one of the largest international spy chains in the world? On 2 September the magistrate extended the judicial remand of the persons accused in what has come to be known as the 'Coomar Narain espionage case' and also directed that the kingpin Coomar Narain himself, the Delhi-based manager of SIM Maneklal Industries, be medically examined

since his health was deteriorating steadily. Narain who had complaints of blood pressure and diabetes even before his dramatic arrest from his 16 Hailey Road office on 17 January 1985, is now suspected to be suffering from tuberculosis. Following an application moved by Coomar Narain, Bharat Bhushan ordered A B Shukla, superintendent of Tihar jail, where Coomar Narain is lodged, to have him medically examined either at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences or at the Dr Ram Manchar Lohia Hospital. It was evident to the court and the medical team at the Tihar jail that the months of detention in prison, the rigours of attending commitment proceedings and perhaps the burden of facing the impending trial was weighing heavily on Coomar Narain.

When the sensational swoop on Coomar Narain and his men took place in January, the espionage ring was described as the "most insidious and deeply entrenched spy group working for foreign agencies." It was the biggest espionage scandal to be unearthed since the "air marshal Larkins spy ring" was busted leading to the arrest of retired major general F D Larkins, his brother air vice-marshal (ret'd) K H Larkins and several former defence ministry officials and businessmen. Both the ring leaders of the spy ring, the Larkins brothers were awarded ten years rigorous imprisonment for their activities when their trial concluded on 24 July this year. Even after the Larkins scandal rocked the defence ministry circles, the ramifications of the Coomar Narain ring were clearly more dangerous and shocking. The sleuths of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), who had hinted at the time of the Larkins arrests, that this was only the tip of the iceberg, were taking no chances with the Coomar Narain case. Warrants of arrest were prepared days in advance. In the Coomar Narain dragnet were "moles" who enjoyed senior positions in the Prime Minister's secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhavan, the departments of defence production and economic affairs. It was revealed later that Coomar Narain was selling some of the most sensitive classified



Coomar Narain

Jagdish Yadav

documents obtained from his "contacts" to several foreign countries.

The espionage case is soon to be sent to the sessions court for trial proceedings against the accused persons. Since proceedings are being conducted under the Official Secrets Act, even the allegations and charges against the 17 accused have not been made public. The progress of the case has been restricted because of the curious nature of investigations which involve scrutiny of hundreds of classified documents which were recovered from the office premises of Coomar Narain and the residences of the others accused. Highly confidential files pertaining to defence production, for example, had been photocopied by Coomar Narain and were confiscated by officials of the IB and RAW. The original documents were discovered from the residence of Jagdish Chander, personal assistant of S C Sarin, secretary, department of defence production. The sensitive nature of such classified documents found in the possession of Coomar Narain and his men are the most incriminating evidence against them.

In a recent order issued by Bharat Bhushan on applications filed by the defence counsel of the accused, permission has been granted for the counsel to examine these documents when the case comes up for trial. Said Mr Bhushan, "In spite of this being a case under the Official Secrets Act, to make it a fair trial we must give an opportunity to the accused to defend themselves and examine the evidence in court against them. Such an opinion of the additional chief metropolitan magistrate has been challenged by the special public prosecutor B R Handa, who has filed an application with the additional district sessions judge that in view of the sensitive nature of the case in progress, the accused and their counsel should be refrained from examining the documents. Bharat Bhushan's order states: "The accused should get the complete disclosures of the facts at the threshold of the trial and as such they are entitled to copies of investigation papers." Mr Handa has contended that the verbatim reproduction of all the confiscated documents for each of the 17 accused and their counsel would only further endanger the security of the country which had been jeopardised by the exchange of the very documents by the accused spies.

What is the nature of the secrets which Coomar Narain and his accomplices were passing on to foreign countries? According to reports



T.N. Kher

available, there are about 2 000 papers lying sealed in the Patiala House court which are examined from time to time by the prosecution or defence counsel. The reproduction of these documents for preparation of defence would only be permitted once the order of R P Gupta is received. It is expected that if the judge refuses permission for the examination of the said evidence, the case would soon be committed to the sessions for trial. The gravity of the case can be gauged from the kind of classified information which were seized from Coomar Narain and his men at the time of the arrests on 17 January. There are hundreds of pages of confidential reports, dossiers of the Intelligence Bureau and RAW, intelligence fact sheets of the political disturbances in Ahmedabad and Punjab, crucial details of defence deals and secret reports of visits of foreign dignitaries. Even the secret cipher code of external affairs ministry, which is used for decoding messages received from foreign missions, had been passed on to foreign contacts by Coomar Narain and his men for a few hundred rupees or bottles of liquor. It is also believed that other evidence with the court proves without doubt that the espionage activities in which Coomar Narain, Yogesh Maneklal, T N Kher, Jagdish Chander and others were indulging in were benefitting foreign countries like Poland and the German Democratic Republic. This was admitted by Coomar Narain himself in his 15 page confessional statement which was recorded in the presence of metropolitan magistrate P S Dham. On 4 February, when Coomar Narain was being persuaded by his wife, Gita Narain, not to confess he had said "Let me get rid of it. I don't want to live any more. I just want to



Yogesh Maneklal

drop dead." During the three-hour long confessional session with the magistrate, he had admitted to passing on documents relating to the country's defence, planning, foreign affairs and economy to these countries. He further confessed that while Maneklal had made crises in the business, he had received "lakhs" as a party in the exchange.

The case took a dramatic turn on 2 July, when Coomar Narain retracted his confessional statement. In an application to Bharat Bhushan, Coomar Narain pleaded "I have been mentally tortured and pressurised during police remand by the investigating agency to confess before the court." He also declared that the confession was "involuntary, untrue, tutored and given under pressure." According to the prosecutor, the retraction of the confession would make little difference to the charges faced by Coomar Narain and the other accused persons. As far as the examination of classified documents by the accused was concerned, he said that the Larkins affair was a case in points. During the proceedings in that case, an vice marshal K H Larkins had requested to be supplied a verbatim copy of the secret defence manual of more than 1,000 pages, which he had leaked out. But in an High Court order, Justice D R Khanna had restricted the examination of the top secret document and Larkins was permitted to make notes from the document for his reference. Now, says Mr Handa, since in the earlier case the High Court order was not challenged and as the documents in the Coomar Narain case are of a more sensitive nature they should not be disclosed as permitted under the Official Secrets Act.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

A Royal Burden

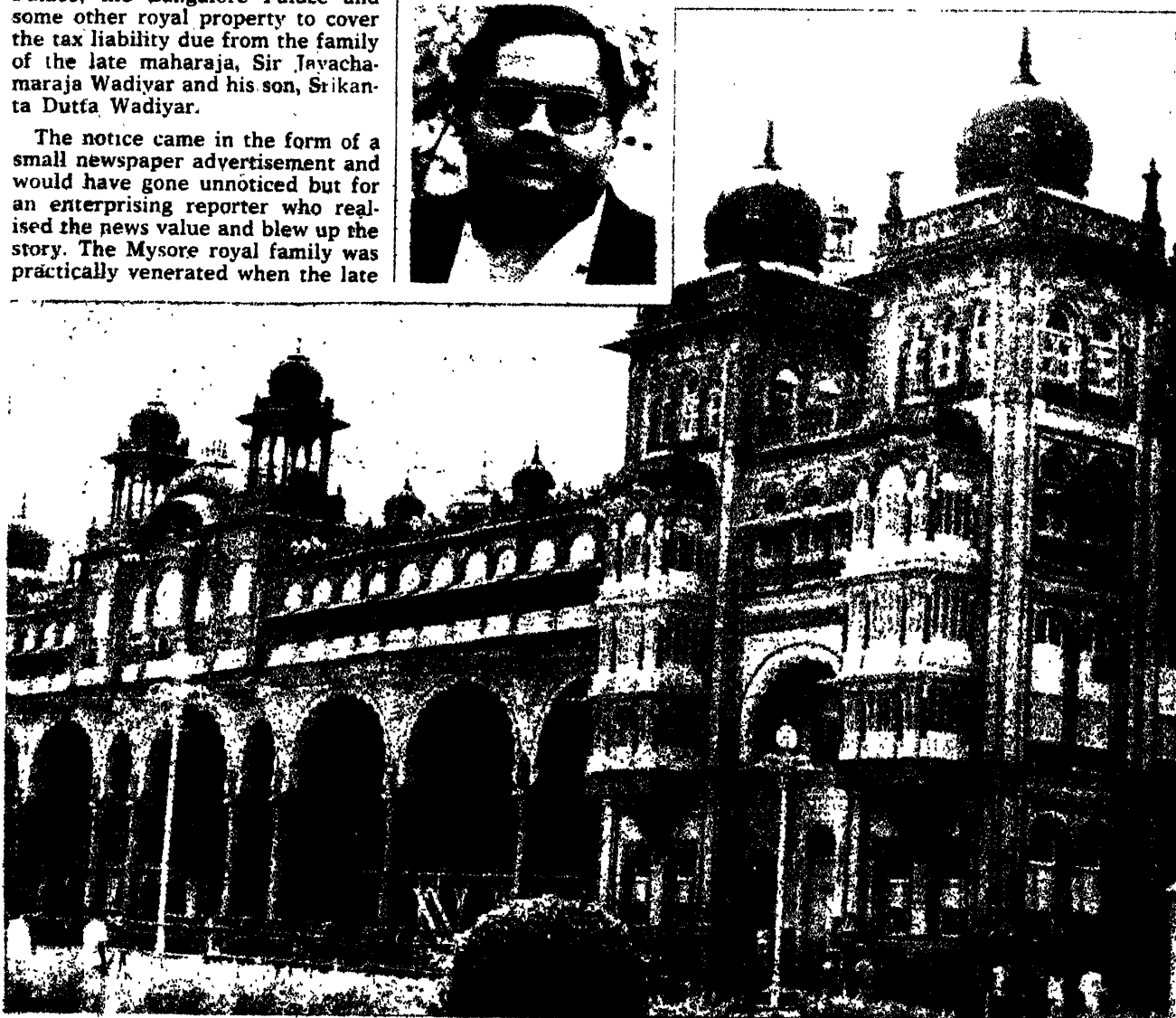
The income tax department has attached the property of the former prince of Mysore to recover dues worth Rs 35 crores

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, Shakespeare said. But long after princely kingdoms and privy purses were abolished, crowns and thrones dispensed with, royal worries continue to dog Srikanta Dutta Narasimharaja Wadiyar, the only son of the last maharaja of Mysore. Towards the end of August the income tax department moved in unobtrusively and issued a provisional attachment notice on the magnificent Mysore Palace, the Bangalore Palace and some other royal property to cover the tax liability due from the family of the late maharaja. Sir Javachamaraja Wadiyar and his son, Srikanta Dutta Wadiyar.

The notice came in the form of a small newspaper advertisement and would have gone unnoticed but for an enterprising reporter who realised the news value and blew up the story. The Mysore royal family was practically venerated when the late

maharaja was alive. Since his death, the family has maintained a low profile. The maharaja's only son, Srikanta Dutta Wadiyar, who was a natural heir to the throne, was elected to the Lok Sabha from Mysore in the last parliamentary election, but he has never been an outstanding public figure and he is taken lightly even in the state Congress(I) circles. The tax controversy suddenly put the spotlight on Mr Wadiyar, much to his discomfiture.

But if anything, the provisional attachment of the royal property came as a boon to Wadiyar. Though for all purposes he is the owner of the Mysore Palace, Wadiyar had written to the state government some years ago, asking it to take over the palace for maintenance and public exhibition. The state government readily obliged and took charge of most of the palace, excluding a part of it which the Wadiyars use for residential purposes. Shortly after wards, it



A view of a portion of the Mysore Palace and inset, Srikanta Dutta Wadiyar

Mushtaq Ahmed

also began generating revenue from the palace in the form of gate collection from visiting tourists. At some point of time, some buildings within the palace compound were also rented out to other government departments.

But according to Wadiyar, the income tax department was all the while computing wealth tax and income tax on the property, in a form known as deemed income, against his name since he was still the owner of the royal property under the family settlement. Early this year, as the income tax and wealth tax arrears climbed to an astronomical sum of Rs 35 crores, the income tax department sounded him on the dues. A Congress (I) MP by this time, Wadiyar represented his case to the income tax department and, he says, "they fully understood my predicament."

Wadiyar began the process of retrieving his property (or rather retrieving the revenue generated by the property) with a letter to the state government on 15 March, in which he accused the state government of not abiding by the terms and conditions previously agreed upon. The letter added that the state government had no authority to collect rent from the tenants within the palace compound. He followed this up with a newspaper advertisement on 1 April, (which, incidentally, went unnoticed) calling upon the tenants and occupants of the Mysore Palace to pay the rent to him.

But what is really surprising is the manner in which the income tax department went out of its way to help Wadiyar recover the revenue from the palace in order to clear the tax arrears. In a notice No 303971 dated 16/7/85 served on the chief secretary of the state government (who is the ex officio secretary of the palace advisory committee), the income tax department said that it was represented to them by Wadiyar that he being the owner of the palace, the revenue generated from the palace in the form of rents and gate collections should go to him. The income tax department further asked the state government to pay Wadiyar the revenues so that it could be adjusted against his tax arrears.

If the case of the Mysore Palace is shady, the affairs regarding the Bangalore Palace are baffling. The income tax department has issued a provisional attachment notice on the Bangalore Palace also, even though the ownership is under dispute. The palace, designed on the lines of the Windsor Castle in Britain, was the summer residence of the late maharaja. But after the abolition of the privy purses, the late maharaja is

said to have leased out the Bangalore Palace to one Chamaraju, a rich contractor, from whom he frequently borrowed huge sums of money. According to Mr Wadiyar, he opposed this leasing out and since the maharaja's death there has been a continuous battle for possession of the Bangalore Palace. The main palace building and the 100 acres of land surrounding it is now in the "wrongful possession" of the Chamundi Hotels Private Ltd., a concern of the Chamarajus, while 380 acres of land surrounding the palace is owned by the Wadiyars. Wadiyar says the entire property belongs to him and he is fighting a legal battle to take possession of it. The Wadiyars believe that the late maharaja was conned out of the Bangalore Palace.

palace has been rented out to film crews. David Lean's *A Passage to India* was shot in the Bangalore Palace. Wadiyar says the Chamundi group rented out the palace to the producers and collected money but the amount was returned after he served a notice on the producers of the film. Wadiyar alleged that attempts were also made by certain powerful bureaucrats to start a posh school on the premises of the palace but he thwarted it by filing an injunction suit.

The income tax department's unexpected gesture, while bailing out Wadiyar from an awkward spot, has stunned the state government. When initially Wadiyar demanded the palaces back and served notice to the



The majestic Bangalore Palace

Mushiq Ahmed

The Bangalore Palace and the surrounding area is located in the heart of Bangalore city and even the state government has an eye on it. A Disneyland was proposed to be constructed on the premises of the palace during the time of Devaraj Urs, while the Chamundi Hotels Private Limited have been wanting to convert the palace into a five star hotel. But Wadiyar has successfully managed to stave off all attempts and the attachment notice by the income tax department serves his purpose.

Even though the legal status of the Bangalore Palace is yet to be determined (Wadiyar has filed a case disputing the government contention that the land comes under the definition of vacant land under the Land Ceiling and Regulations Act), the

tenants, the matter was considered by the palace advisory committee. But as the income tax department stepped in, the matter was quickly referred to the law department. Besides, since the Bangalore and the Mysore palaces net in revenue worth Rs 40 to 50 lakhs a year, the state government would not like to lose control over the property. At the time of writing, the state government has formed a cabinet subcommittee "to study the problem relating to the properties of the Mysore royal family." But the matter is sure to have political overtones, considering that Wadiyar is also a Congress (I) MP. As it is, Wadiyar is sore with the state government and while speaking to SUNDAY, said that chief minister R K Hegde had not even bothered to give him a hearing.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

For several years it has been commonplace to refer to Chembur, particularly in the press, as a "gas chamber" because of the pollution from the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers plant and other chemical and petro-chemical industries in the area. In fact, the Thane Belapur belt is the product of a tremendous impetus to development in the third Five Year Plan. Little did people realise that this joke would one day become a reality as it did on 30 August when in one of the biggest gas leaks since the Bhopal tragedy last December, chlorine leaked out from the caustic soda unit of the Calico Chemicals plant, killing one person and affecting nearly 200 others.

The first to be affected by the poisonous gas, besides the staff of the plant, were the doctors and the fire brigade men who rushed there. According to a Calico spokesman, no

one from the nearby industries came to their help though such a view was contradicted by a spokesman of the Rashtriya Chemicals who told the chairman of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (HPCB), C D Oomachen, that they had kept their technicians in readiness but no one asked for them. On 31 August, Mr Oomachen went to the factory site and with the help of experts from the Standard Alkali and Dr P K Ghosh of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) supervised the chlorine neutralisation process. Even the following day there was another leak indicating how tricky it is to handle chlorine which affects humans dangerously. It will take between six and eight months for the persons affected by the gas to recover and that too with continuous medical care.

Dr S R Kamat of the KEM Hospital has suggested that special train

Is Bombay Chembur

With the management of Calico the tragedy, other chemical units to endanger human life

ing should be given to the fire brigade personnel to cope with such poisonous gas leaks. An expert on diseases caused by pollution, Dr Kamat said that many industries do not take proper care of their plants, nor do they inform the people about the kind of dangerous chemicals they



Datta Samant who was hospitalised after the gas leak



The corroded chlorine storage tanks of Calico Chemicals, one of which had b

Safe After Gas Leak?

Chemicals still unpunished for in the area will now feel free reports Olga Tellis

use. A suggestion has also been made to the government that it be made mandatory for the companies handling hazardous chemicals to display boards outside their offices indicating the product lines, the material used and what the people in the locality should do in the case of a

calamity.

Chlorine, derived from the Greek chloros, meaning green, is a greenish yellow gas with a pungent odour. Its atomic number is 17. Chlorine, which was first made in 1774 by K.W. Scheele, is a very reactive substance. According to Modi's Medical Jurisprudence and Toxicology, there is a feeling of breathlessness and suffocation if one inhales the gas. People exposed to vapours of chlorine suffer from its chronic effect. They become anaemic, suffer from dyspeptic complaints and acidity and they lose weight. Lung trouble soon sets in resulting in chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Chlorine was largely used as a lethal gas by the Germans during the First World War and it caused havoc among the Allied forces.

The Garg committee, which studied the safety standards of the 54 chemical-based industries in the Chem-

bur-Thane-Belapur-Kalyan industrial belt of north Bombay, found only seven per cent of the factories safe. The rest were prone to mishaps. The Garg committee, which was set up by the MPCB to locate the deficiencies in the plants and suggest remedies, had made several recommendations for all the units.

A disturbing factor arising from the recent disaster is the stand taken by Calico Chemicals: they plan to challenge the findings of the Garg committee report. The management is reported to have said that "their plant is safe to operate." They also said that they have taken follow-up action by way of attending to the valves and pipelines which were found corroded by the committee. Storage vessels in the chlorine plant are included in the test schedule. The management said that two tanks have already been tested and found



Masked technicians at the site of the leak

Planned Leakage or Industrial Accident?

Dr Datta Samant, the trade union leader, was one of the victims of the Chembur chlorine leak. He has accused the management of Calico Chemicals of deliberately organising the leak in order to disperse workers who had collected at the gate. It went out of their control and the factory was shut down. The company has been trying to close down the factory under one pretext or another but had not been given permission by the government. On the other hand, the leakage is part of an industrial accident as the company has not implemented the Garg report which had specifically mentioned that the pipe from which the chlorine leaked out had corroded.

Between January and May this year, Calico received several disconnection notices from the Tata Electric Company for non-payment of dues amounting to over Rs 97 lakhs. In February 1985, the Garg Committee on environment released a report on the various deficiencies in the plant and made its own recommendations.

• 4 April: The management of Calico receives a telegram from Tata Electric Co. It is addressed to N. N. Chatterjee, the general manager, and regrets that they "were unable to grant exemption from disconnection pending hearing by the minister of labour as outstandings have continued to rise despite your repeated promises to pay promptly current bill plus part outstanding bills in deference to minister's wishes. At least current consumption bill must be paid if you wish to avoid disconnection on 5 April at scheduled time as informed to you already. This amount is Rs 50 lakhs."

• 23 April: The company receives another telegram from Tata Electric saying, "Since your outstanding dues are continuing to mount because no efforts are being made by you to pay them up and your cheques have been repeatedly returned by the bank, please be advised that your power supply is liable to be disconnected after midnight 22 May 1985."

• 23 May: Manufacturing activities of the company come to a halt at 1.00 pm due to disconnection of power by Tatas. The company puts up a notice to that effect.

• 29 May: The company applies to the commissioner of labour for per-

mission to lay-off under Section 25-M of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

• 27 June: The company management writes to the commissioner of labour with a copy of the letter to the factory inspector expressing its requirement of 13 workmen connected with the maintenance of the chlorine section. These workmen's names are among those who were sought to be laid-off in the application made on 29 May.

• 15 July: The deputy chief inspector of factories H. D. Patil, at the instance of the union and in reply to the company's letter of 27 May to meet him on 19 July, agrees to attend detailed discussions on workmen for the chlorine unit.

• 22 July: At the meeting held in the office of the chief inspector of factories, the management decides that 350 technically qualified supervisors/engineers including 60 specially for the caustic-chlorine plant should look after the safety of the plant. At no time, according to the union, did the company ask for 13 men that they claimed to have asked for.

• 25 July: The assistant labour commissioner, B. Haldvanekar, refuses permission to the company to lay-off workers as per their application with effect from 23 May. He notes that the management started laying off 1,204 workmen with effect from 23 May, and made an application on 29 May for the lay-off. This was

received at the commissioner of labour's office on 31 May and delivered to the union representing the workmen on 10 June. He said, "This clearly indicates that the management has approached the authority after lay-off is already started."

• 27 July: The union writes to the company inviting attention to the government's order rejecting the lay-off application and requests the company to lift the lay-off.

• 29 July: The union writes to the Chembur police station enclosing the 25 July order of the labour commissioner.

• 30 July: The company receives a letter from Tata Electric. The letter says that Calico need pay only ten per cent of the total outstanding due to enable restoration of power supply.

• 5 August: The company receives a letter from M. N. Biswas, under secretary to government of India, ministry of finance, that it is "not possible to accede to their request for exemption of customs duty on calcium carbide."

• 19 August: Jagdish Joshi, secretary, labour department, advises the company to have discussions with the union and reopen factory.

• 26 August: A meeting between Dr Samant and the management N. N. Chatterjee allegedly shies away from the meeting and makes it known that the management would like to close down the plant.

• 28 August: The company receives a letter from the labour department, government of Maharashtra, giving them three important reliefs and recommending various facilities like exemption from sales tax, import duty and revision of electricity rates.

• 29 August: The company issues a letter of permanent closure to Dr Samant. It is delivered to his home.

• 30 August: Dr Samant arranges a gate meeting of workers. The meeting is scheduled for 9.30 am. At that time the first chlorine leak starts and is brought under control at 10.15 am. The fire brigade reaches the spot. Earlier at 8.30 am, officers from the company's housing colony were evacuated to the B.A.C. hostel where they were given lunch and tea. At 11 am Dr Samant arrives and starts his speech at the gate. There is a sudden blast and chlorine fumes move towards the main gate which is a few hundred yards from the chlorine tanks.



A victim of the Chembur gas leak

INVESTIGATION

satisfactory.

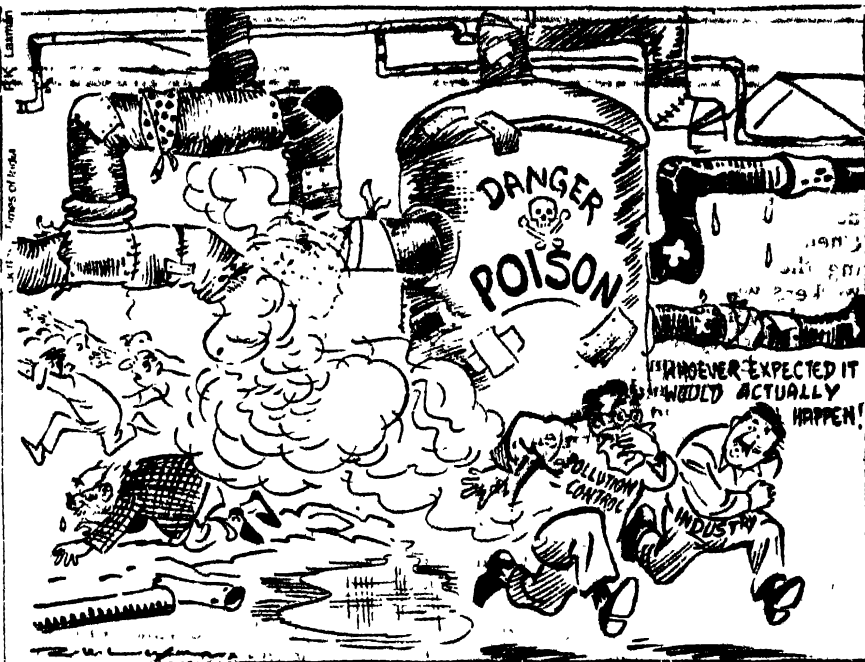
Yet it was from the same tank, with a corroded pipeline and faulty valve—which the Garg committee wanted changed—that the fatal leak occurred.

The stand taken by the Calico management does not augur well for the future of pollution control in this dangerous industrial belt. While the management is still unscathed and has applied for anticipatory bail fearing arrest (which by now should have taken place because it is more than eight days since the police filed a complaint under Section 304-A and 305 of the Indian Penal Code), it has now been revealed that the plant has been operating for nearly five years without a municipal licence.

Additional municipal commissioner Ramamurthi said that since 1979 the company's licence to operate was not renewed as it had failed to comply with conditions prescribed by the chief fire officer after a fire broke out in the unit that year. The company, however, continued to work without a licence and the corporation had launched a prosecution. According to Mr Ramamurthi, the fire brigade and superintendent of licences had examined the stocks of various chemicals and other substances in the factory. They had suggested that the management maintain its own fire-fighting unit. However, the company was using its influence to prevail upon the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) to waive these conditions. The BMC, however, maintained a tough stand as the plant had been storing highly combustible substances like chlorine and had to have its own fire-fighting unit.

Like Calico, it is understood that several other companies, many of them mighty multinationals, are also planning to challenge the Garg committee report. If this happens it is going to open the floodgates to a fiery hell: if Calico Chemicals has been able to operate for five long years without a licence and with a court case pending other chemical units, too, will feel free to pollute the atmosphere and imperil human life with impunity.

The government, paralysed by political infighting, has been unable to act on the Garg committee report even though the reports were submitted to it more than four months ago. C.D. Oomachen has complained about poor management and maintenance of pollution control equipment in industries. He also drew attention to the fact that the board has been hampered in its work by industries not sharing their information on chemicals stored, manufactured and pro-



cessed and the situation that is likely to arise if such information is withheld. Yet the government, whose ministers and top bureaucrats live in Malabar Hill and Foreshore Road, far away from the hazardous industrial belt, has been unable to come to grips with these problems and take quick decisions. It is understood that the Tata thermal station management has ordered for a desulphurising plant from Norway but it is still to get the permission to import it. There are several problems faced even by companies that do want to do something about pollution control and safety equipment but the government is lethargic.

Aware of the bad name that the chemical industry is getting, particularly after the Bhopal tragedy, chemical engineers and companies in the city are waking up to the need to do something about it. A workshop has been organised by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to discuss a coordinated approach to industrial safety. Dr S.B. Duvedi of the chamber said that several multinationals have complained about lack of infrastructure in the Thane-Belapur belt, particularly lack of roads and communication which could prove disastrous in the event of large-scale leaks.

Dr T.P.S. Rajan, general manager and vice-president of Bombay Gas, and former president of the Indian Chemical Manufacturing Association told SUNDAY that it was impossible to have factories with zero risk. It would become so expensive that their products would be priced out of the reach of buyers. What can be

done now is to develop the emergency response approach: "Whilst hoping for the best you must be ready for the worst." This is the philosophy, he said, that has been propounded abroad particularly in the United States by the chemical industry, after the Bhopal tragedy. For instance, said Dr Rajan, Dow Chemicals, USA, has evolved a code to show that the industries care:

- Setting up a science communication centre at the Missouri University School of Journalism with a fifty thousand dollar contribution; the aim is to help students and working journalists to grow more familiar with resources for accurate information on scientific and environmental topics
- Over a dozen Dow scientists are available for media interviews across the country to answer questions concerning scientific issues through a visible scientific programme.
- Community relations resources centres have been established at their various manufacturing establishments to provide information and tools needed to make positive contribution to the respective communities.

A coordinated system with fire brigade, ambulances, hospitals, dispensaries which can be activated at the time of tragedy must be created and made readily available. During the Second World War, as Dr Rajan recalled, there were bomb shelters in the city. Safety was treated on a war footing. The pollution control and safety measures in the industrial belt should be taken up on a war footing, too, if Bombay is to be saved from the fate of Bhopal.

Bombay's 15 Killer Factories

The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board report on chemical factories in the Thane-Belapur-Kalyan region describes them as potential death-traps which violate safety standards

There is a lot of talk of a nuclear winter, but as far as Bombayites are concerned the immediate danger is from a "chemical winter," which can come suddenly and stealthily, striking fatal blows. These blows will come from chemicals like fluorine and chlorine among others which often do irreparable harm to human beings. Hydrochloric acid, for example, causes slow death to more people than is imagined. It is because diagnostic facilities are not available in India that people are not aware of the killers they live and work with.

The entry of the Maharashtra pollution control board as a watchdog body has helped create public awareness regarding chemical hazards. Its 11-member environment safety committee, headed by Dr R.K. Garg (director, chemical engineering group, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre) had submitted a report on 15 industries (SUNDAY, 28 July). The committee has recently submitted another report on 11 factories in the Thane-Belapur belt and four in Kalyan. These areas, according to members of the safety committee, are chemical death-traps. In some cases, it was noted with grave concern there is not even a fire brigade in the vicinity. The 15 factories in the Thane-Belapur-Kalyan region are Bayer, Sandoz, Indofil Chemicals Limited, Rallis India Ltd (Thane), National Fluorine Corporation, Rallis India (Thane-Belapur), National Organic Chemical Industries Ltd, Hico Products Ltd, Standard Mills Co Ltd, (Standard Alkali), Herdillia

Chemicals Ltd, Indian Explosives Ltd, Indian Dyestuff Industries, Century Rayon, Century Chemicals and Dharamsi Morarjee. Excerpts from the report:

Bayer: Established in 1967. The toxic chemicals used are chlorine, hydrogen sulphide, ethylene oxide, carbondisulphide, aniline, paranitrochlorobenzene, phosphorus, phosphorus trichloride, acetic acid, hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acid. Ethylene oxide and carbon disulphide constitute fire hazards.

The committee found that the biochemical oxygen demand (b.o.d) and chemical oxygen demand (c.o.d.) values in effluents are very high. Dissolved oxygen is nil in the effluent. The effluent treatment plant requires attention. There was no monitoring of emission in the ambient air. There is a safety officer but no safety group. Sulphur loading in the reaction vessel in the pesticide division is done manually. This is wrong.

Sandoz (Thane): The hazardous chemicals used are: acetone, ammonia, bromine, caustic soda, chloroform, DDT, hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, ethylene oxide, nitric acid, toluene, sulphuric acid, xylene and methanol. Out of these acetone, crotonaldehyde, ethylene oxide, methanol, toluene and xylene constitute fire hazards. Except acetone all other chemicals are highly toxic.

The committee found that effluent

standards are being met except for dissolved oxygen. However, no monitoring of gaseous emissions is being done at present. No periodic drills are conducted and personal protective equipment is not worn by operators.

Indofil: Toxic chemicals handled are carbon disulphide, ethylene diamine, sodium hydroxide, karathane, xylene, styrene, hydrogen peroxide, formaldehyde, ethylene diamine, styrene monomer, acrylic monomer and nitrocellulose. These constitute a fire hazard.

The committee found that standards for c.o.d. and b.o.d. are not being met. The bi-assay test is not being carried out. Gaseous emissions are not monitored. All these things require immediate attention.

Rallis: Established in 1960, it manufactures only formulations for different pesticides. Toxic chemicals handled are benzene hexachloride (bhc), DDT, cyclohexanone, epichlorohydrin, aromax and xylene. These also constitute a fire hazard.

There is no effluent treatment plant. The floor washings, which contain pesticides, are collected in a well, soda ash is added and the mixture is left out in the sun. The emissions are not monitored. There is no regular full-time safety officer in the company. There is no separate fire fighting group, though all personnel are trained to handle the fire fighting system.

National Fluorine Corporation: Toxic chemicals handled are hydrofluoric acid, sulphuric acid, ammonia, ammonium bifluoride and fluoric acid.

Effluents are neither treated nor monitored. Neither is there any monitoring of gaseous emissions. There is no safety officer in the company though small toxic chemicals are handled. Handling of various chemicals is not done in a proper manner.

Rallis (Thane-Belapur road): Toxic and fire hazardous chemicals handled are phosphorus pentasulphide, monomethyl amine, methanol, monochloroacetic acid, paranitrophenol, paranitrometacresol, cyclohexanone and toluene.

Smoke billowing out of factories: costly development



B.o.d. and c.o.d. levels in effluent are above standard. The secondary treatment facility is not commissioned. No monitoring is being done for toxic gases in the ambient air.

National Organic Chemical: Established in 1964, it manufactures a wide variety of petro-chemicals with naphtha and chlorine as raw material. The process involves high temperature, high pressure exothermic reactions. Fire hazardous and toxic chemicals handled are benzene, vinyl chloride, isopropyl alcohol, methyl isobutyl, ketone butanol, diacetone alcohol ethylene dichloride, ethylene oxide and chlorine. The c.o.d. level in effluent is higher than the standard. At present no monitoring of toxic emission or gases is being done.

In the last three years they have had one fire mishap when propylene was being loaded. A spark, caused by rattling and striking of mild steel pipe fittings to the tanker body, lit up the chemical.

Hico Products: Toxic chemicals handled are chlorine formalin, and ethylene oxide. They are also fire hazards. The b.o.d. and c.o.d. exceed prescribed limits. No monitoring is done of gaseous emissions. There is no full-time safety officer, no safety group and no separate storage water for fire fighting. Ethylene oxide is stored without a refrigeration system. Concentration of ethylene oxide, chlorine and hydrochloric acid vapour in ambient air is not monitored from the point of view of toxicity.

Standard Mills (Chemical Division): Handles toxic chemicals like caustic soda lye, caustic potash lye, chlorine, ethyl chloride, carbon tetrachloride, hydrochloric acid, sulphuric acid and mercury. Hydrogen, which is a byproduct of electrolysis, constitutes a fire hazard. The company is required to monitor the level of mercury in the general environment. There is no safety group in the company.

Deficiencies: The sulphuric acid storage tanks are not tested annually. Pressure vessels are not tested by approved persons/agencies as per Rule 65 of Maharashtra Factory Rules (MFR), 1963. The salt storage godown is in a corroded condition. There is no dyke around the hydrochloric acid storage tanks. Flame-proof electrical fittings are not used in the cell house.

Herdillia Chemicals: Toxic chemicals handled are acetone, benzene, cumene, diacetone alcohol, phthalic anhydride, mphenol, sulphuric acid, hydrochloric acid and sodium hydro-



A Bombay factory on fire

xide. The first three constitute fire hazards.

Effluent is not as per standard. Levels of d.o., b.o.d., c.o.d and phenolic compounds do not conform to standards prescribed. Gaseous emissions are not being monitored. These require to be done.

Deficiencies detected include: benzene-propylene reaction in cumene plant, which is exothermic in nature, does not have an automatic control. Cumene, which is an intermediate product of phenol, is toxic and highly inflammable in nature and is stored in large amounts. Benzene, which is toxic in nature and is inflammable, is not being monitored.

The committee recommended removal of Kulkshot village situated beside the factory. Since highly hazardous processes are being carried out by Herdillia Chemicals it is advisable to move the village to a safe distance.

Indian Explosives: Only hazardous chemical used is methanol. It has no fire tender. Effluent has a lot of foam which sometimes overflows from the tank. Emissions are not monitored from the toxicity point of view. All safety instructions are written only in English. Electrical switch room is not under positive pressure. The whole area should have flame-proof fitting as per standard of Zone-1, as plant is closed shed as per ISI standard. No test reports of pressure vessels are maintained.

Indian Dyestuff Industry: Deals with sulphuric acid, acetic acid, chlorine, methanol, nitrobenzene, phenol,

phthalic anhydride which are toxic and acrylonitrile which is inflammable. The committee found chlorine emission high from the aluminium chloride plant (ACP) and particulate matter, mainly aluminium oxide, released from the plant. There is no regular training of operators, charging of chlorine in the ACP is not done from a bank of cylinders. High chlorine emission indicates inadequate performance of scrubbing system. Structures in the ACP appear to be in a corroded condition. Vents from chlorosulphuric acid and oleum storage tanks are not provided with scrubbers. Dimethyl sulphate is stored in drums without adequate protection. Benzene is not monitored. Oxides of nitrogen are not monitored at scrubbing vent of nitric acid. Spray driers are not provided with wet scrubbing systems.

Century Rayon: Has a filament viscose plant with production of 34 tyres per day and a tyre cord plant of 30 tyres per day. Hazardous chemicals handled are carbon disulphide, sulphuric acid (98%), caustic soda and during the process hydrogen sulphide is also generated. Sulphur dioxide and carbon disulphide emissions are high. Risk analysis is not carried out during the manufacturing process. Dyke walls and flooring of sulphuric acid storage tanks do not have acid-proof lining. Hydrogen sulphide is not monitored in the spinning section.

Century Chemicals: Toxic and hazardous chemicals dealt with include caustic soda lye, chlorine and hydrochloric acid. There is no record maintained of inspection and testing of pressure vessels. Emergency drills are not conducted periodically for workers to make them fully aware of procedures in case of chlorine leaking from storage tanks and tankers. Mercury level in the air is not monitored. Workers do not have personal protective equipment in the plant area.

Dharamsi Morarjee: Deals with 98% sulphuric acid, chlorosulphonic acid, oleum, liquid sulphur trioxide, aluminium sulphate and also handles hydrochloric acid which is highly toxic. Committee found alumin sulphate evaporators in open pans without any barricade and in a corroded condition. There is a lot of acidic spilling. General housekeeping in plant area is not good. Platform of sulphur melting section and molten sulphur storage tank is in a corroded condition. Dust level and fluorine in superphosphate plant appear high. There is no monitoring for particulate matter in the air. They do not have a disaster plan.

SRILANKA

Another Round of Terror

Tamil Tigers behind the killings, says Indian intelligence

The Eelam movement suffered a setback when two former Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) MPs, M. Alalasundaram and V. Tharmalingam were kidnapped and shot dead on 3 September. Two young men entered Alalasundaram's house to request him to sign their character certificates. Alalasundaram was then kidnapped at gunpoint and whisked off in a car. On the way they stopped at a wedding where Mr Tharmalingam was present. He was asked to come out and meet Mr Alalasundaram who they said, was waiting for him in the car. The bullet-riddled bodies of the two leaders were found the next day. Shock, disbelief and anger swept through not just Jaffna but also Madras. The two other TULF MPs living in Jaffna quickly went underground. The families of the two MPs, K. Thurairathinam and K. Rajalingam, have confirmed that they are safe though they will remain in hiding.

What outraged the Tamils was that the killings were done by the militants, whom they had come to love and respect. There was a huge turnout for the funerals. Reports from Jaffna indicated that the attendance for Mr Tharmalingam's funeral was second only to the Gandhi of Tamil Eelam, S.J.V. Chelvanayagam's. For the first time, the Tamil masses raised anti-militant slogans. Soon after the incident the Sri Lanka government announced that the killings were the handiwork of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The declaration was greeted sceptically as the Sri Lanka government views the LTTE as a major threat and would do anything to discredit it. Talking to SUNDAY the day after the killing, the TULF secretary general A. Amirthalingam said that it was the work of either the LTTE or the TELO. But it was clear that it was not the work of the Sri Lankan armed forces. Said Mr Amirthalingam, "The present situation in Jaffna is such that it is impossible for the armed forces to do such a thing." A Bristol university professor who toured Jaffna recently also told SUNDAY that the army had been withdrawn. The armed forces would not venture out as Jaffna is controlled by the militants. The killers also had to move

around, picking up the victims. There was talk about the TEA (Tamil Eelam Army) led by Panarguda Maheshwaran being responsible for the crime. But Tamil leaders reject this hypothesis as none of the small groups would dare to 'fly against public opinion'.

Indian intelligence agencies are positive that the killings were the work of the LTTE. They believe that V. Pirabhakaran, leader of the LTTE who was present in Jaffna on that day, masterminded the operation. LTTE sources deny that Pirabhakaran was in Jaffna on 3 September but say that he was compelled to cross over to Eelam the day the incident occurred as he wanted to console the bereaved families. Inquiries by SUNDAY indicate that the killing was the work of the rebel elements of the LTTE who feared that the TULF was



Alalasundaram and Tharmalingam (right): victims

bartering away Eelam for a 'watered down' settlement. Pirabhakaran had gone to Jaffna the day after the incident to offer his condolences and to control certain sections of his organisation that were taking the law in their own hands. Pirabhakaran had been in Tamil Nadu since the Thimphu talks began. In the meantime, his "boys" had been feeling threatened by the "undesirable activities" of the TULF. The attack on Tamil civilians in Trincomalee by the Sinhalese home guards provided Pirabhakaran an opportunity to mastermind a series of ambushes and guerrilla attacks in the eastern province.

The LTTE and the ENLF, have stated that none of its constituents—the TELO, EPRLF and EROS—were responsible for the killings. Mean-

while, Amirthalingam said that the incident had taken the TULF by surprise. Said he, "We had worked so unitedly till now," and feared that such activities would create dissensions within the Tamil ranks. He was, however, confident that the negotiations would continue in spite of the incident.

The killing is probably a warning to the TULF and the PLOT that the militants would not tolerate any proposal that did not meet the aspirations of the Tamils: there were fears in the Tamil areas that the TULF and the PLOT were about to accept a settlement as they had been promised important positions. What made things worse was a news item that was published in *The Island*, a newspaper published from Colombo that the PLOT and the TULF had entered into a secret agreement with the government of Sri Lanka and that they would sign a settlement on September. Just two days before his death, Alalasundaram telephoned Amirthalingam informing him that posters had appeared all over Jaffna saying that TULF leaders would meet the same fate as Longowal. The posters also referred to the deportation incident which the militants believed the TULF were responsible for.

The Indian government reacted swiftly to the "senseless killings" and expressed shock and distress. The killing has also achieved its purpose of injecting fear in the TULF and the PLOT. Even if they had intended to agree to dilute the proposals, they will now have to revise their strategy knowing that their lives are at stake. For the first time, the militants have vindicated the Sri Lankan government's claim that they are terrorists and not freedom fighters. The image of the Tamil militants as valiant freedom fighters has been tarnished. It is now embarrassing for India to associate with the group. Naturally, India's feelings will only harden against a group that makes a mockery of the peace process that it has initiated. Here too, they have played into the hands of the Sri Lankan government which has been trying to sour relations between India and the militants. It has also created an estrangement between the militants and the TULF and between the LTTE and the ENLF.

By making martyrs out of the TULF leaders, the incident has given a new relevance to the TULF which had been overtaken by the militants in terms of credibility since the July 1983 holocaust. The killings have

also angered the Tamil expatriate community which is the main source of funds to the militants. An outraged representative of the Tamil expatriate community, while speaking to Amirthalingam from London on the phone said that his unit would stop the supply of funds to the group that was responsible for the incident. It has also shocked the Tamil masses. The guerrillas have been effective

only because they have been able to camouflage themselves by mixing with the people after a guerrilla operation. So far, the militants as guerrilla fighters have wielded power without responsibility. They have now entered the realm of political realities. They must realise that today they are responsible to the masses.

Anita Pratap, Madras

KERALA

A Make-believe Crisis

PM's involvement fails to end UDF stalemate

During his recent three-day visit to Kerala Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's involvement in the crisis arising out of the Kerala Congress's threat to pull out of the UDF (United Democratic Front) unless its member, Balakrishna Pillai was reinducted into the ministry was very much on the cards. Although the PM maintained that he did not want to be drawn into the problem and that it was an issue to be settled by the state's chief minister, he assigned the Congress(I) general secretary G K Moopanar to "sort out the issue."

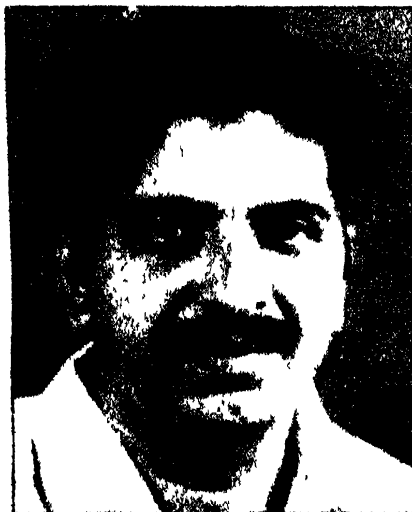
Kerala's former electricity minister Mr Pillai, had caused a lot of embarrassment to the state's Congress(I) chief minister K. Karunakaran when he said that a "Punjab type" agitation was necessary in Kerala to solve the state's problems. Following this, a Congress activist started a court case against Mr Pillai. The court said that while the case was in progress it was only in the highest traditions of democracy that the minister should resign (SUNDAY 1-7 September). However, as soon as the court dismissed the case, the Kerala Congress started pressurising the chief minister to reinduct the former minister.

Till the time of going to press the Kerala Congress whose participation is important as far as the strength of the Congress(I)-led UDF ministry is concerned, was yet to decide on its final course of action. But apparently, neither the Congress(I) nor the Kerala Congress are prepared to make any compromise on the question of Mr Pillai's readmission as it has become a prestige issue for both. However, at this juncture the political necessities guiding the two parties needs to be seen.

The retired Supreme Court judge

K.K. Mathew whose advice the CM had sought has, according to sources, sent the issue to the CM again. The Kerala Congress leaders feel that the chief minister is trying to evade a political issue by pointing out non-existent legal complications. Meanwhile the CPI(M) leader and MLA Varkala Radhakrishnan has said that the very act of seeking advice from a retired Supreme Court judge is against the Constitution. Mr Radhakrishnan pointed out that according to subsection seven of Clause 124 of the Constitution, a retired Supreme Court judge cannot plead in any legal matter or appear before any court of law in the country. Only advocates are allowed by the Advocates Act to offer legal advice; retired Supreme Court judges can only constitute commissions or tribunals, Mr Radhakrishnan added.

Even as the legal complications are being discussed, it is evident that the chief minister will not bow down to pressure from the Kerala Congress.



R. Balakrishna Pillai

The chief minister was only playing for time so that the Kerala Congress's anger would subside. While the Kerala Congress has served an ultimatum saying that the chief minister should make his decision known by early September, the party has nowhere to go if it pulls out of the UDF as the Left Front has already closed its doors for it. The Kerala Congress leaders, who have over the years, shown an admirable knack for survival by switching political umbrellas at opportune moments, cannot be expected to bid farewell to the UDF and commit political hara-kiri.

At the time of going to press the Kerala Congress leaders were trying to evolve a sort of face-saving formula, incidentally, something which the Congress(I) chief minister is also very good at. The chief minister would not go to the extent of saying "a direct no" to Balakrishna Pillai but he is expected to take some more time to decide the issue with the help of the Governor, P. Ramachandran.

The opposition which has been riding high, thanks to the dissension within the ruling front, has been launching tirades against a demoralised ruling front in the Assembly. "What happened to your threat of not sitting in the Assembly from 3 September without Pillai as minister?" the Marxist leader M.V. Raghavan asked the Kerala Congress ministers who sat helplessly and shamefacedly hearing this. On the other hand, the Indian Union Muslim League has been trying to pacify both the Congress(I) and the Kerala Congress leaders and chances are that they will impress upon the Kerala Congress the need to continue in the ministry, come what may.

Meanwhile, some opposition leaders like E.K. Nayanar (CPI(M) Baby John (RSP) and P. Viswambharan (Janata Party) met the Prime Minister at the Kovalam ITDC hotel and submitted a memorandum of corruption charges against three of the UDF ministers, Mr Srinivasan of the SRP, Balakrishna Pillai (Kerala Congress) and M.P. Gangadharam (Congress(I)). According to sources, the PM asked them to approach the state anti-corruption bureau. The opposition leaders who spent 30 minutes with Mr Gandhi, said that the bureau was meant to be an eyewash and a body where even the word corruption has not been defined properly.

As for the wrangling UDF partners, it seems that power will continue to be the elixir forcing them to forget political differences and cling on to each other.

Bino K. John, Trivandrum

DOORDARSHAN

Not Just Cricket

Less TV coverage for Test matches

b9b6

Everything Doordarshan does or does not do invariably leads to a volley of protests. The latest instance being the decision to discontinue a ball-by-ball live coverage of the current Test series being played in Sri Lanka. And before Doordarshan could proclaim the blackout, there was an avalanche of protest from sports enthusiasts who exclaimed, "That's the end of direct telecasts from Colombo!" Others who had been complaining that Doordarshan gives importance to only two sports, cricket and more cricket, heaved a sigh of relief. Caught between the two, the Doordarshan came up with a convincing reply: it was a policy decision made by the organisation along with the information and broadcasting ministry and the department of education to provide a balanced coverage of all sports. It also explained that from now on the Doordarshan authorities would rigidly adhere to the annual sports calendar drawn up by it in consultation with sports federations.

The kind of television coverage provided for the month long tour of the 15 Indian test stars to Sri Lanka where they are to play three Tests, three one-day internationals and two three day fixtures, could well be the pattern which Doordarshan will adopt for all future tours.

The point that cricket lovers have missed completely while criticising the Doordarshan's move, is that a direct telecast involves a large expenditure. The annual budget of Doordarshan for purchasing televi-

sion rights and paying for satellite time is between Rs 20 and Rs 30 lakhs. This amount is earmarked for all the events in the calendar which includes other sports like tennis, football and hockey as well as premier international sporting events like the Olympics, the Asian Games, the Wimbledon and the US Open Tennis Championships which Doordarshan has been telecasting live, for the last two years.

For the current one day internationals in Sri Lanka (which are being telecast live) Doordarshan had to pay Rs six lakhs in foreign exchange. The cost of providing live coverage for the forthcoming three nation one day internationals to be played in Sharjah in November would be even more prohibitive. The coverage for the Sharjah matches could cost the Doordarshan over Rs 15 lakhs in foreign exchange. Questioned, a Doordarshan official said "Cricket gets more than 75 per cent of sports time on television and takes a major chunk of our budget for television rights. Besides, who is interested in tedious five day matches anymore?"

There are other reasons too behind the exclusion of the Sri Lanka Test matches on the live coverage list of 1985. The Doordarshan's newfound "sister organisation," the All India Radio is broadcasting a live relay of the series from Colombo. Moreover, direct telecasts from Sri Lanka of such a long foreign tour would have disrupted the educational television programmes which are aired six days a week during the day. Said J D

Baweja, additional director-general of Doordarshan, "Television has become a very costly business. We have adopted a policy which is followed by other broadcasting services including the BBC. Doordarshan receives a fixed budget for sports coverage and has to decide on its priorities for live coverage of foreign tours like the one in progress." He added that the same pattern was likely to be followed for the forthcoming test series in Australia though no decision had been taken as yet.

As far as first class cricket being played at home is concerned, Doordarshan will have to decide whether it will be providing coverage for Test matches on the national network and also if it will include in it, the city where the Test match would be in progress. There have been discussions between the Board of Cricket Control in India and the Doordarshan directorate regarding discontinuing live telecasts of the matches in the places where they would be played. In most of the cricket playing nations, telecasts of Tests in the same city is allowed on either a deferred basis or only during the post noon session. The cricket board had, during the last cricket season, protested that television had made a dent in gate collections specially in Bombay and Delhi where viewers preferred to sit and watch the game at home, instead of paying for watching it from the stands. The same question came up during the Davis Cup quarter finals between India and Sweden in Bangalore in the first week of August.

The All India Lawn Tennis Association had demanded that Doordarshan exclude Bangalore during the direct telecast of the tie on the national hook up. Doordarshan had then argued that the telecast in Bangalore would not have any effect on the gate money collection since most of the 8,000 seats at the KSLTA stadium were booked even before the matches could begin. Finally, the tennis match did thrill millions all over the country, including the viewers of Bangalore. Likewise, the extensive coverage of the 25th World Amateur Billiards Championships played in New Delhi in July and August this year was also an indication that there would be a greater variety of sports coverage on television including off beat events like cycling, skating and gymnastics. Cricket, which will receive selective coverage at the most suitable time-slot inspite of these changes, would still remain at the top of the sports charts for Doordarshan.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

Colombo Test in progress



BIHAR

A Parting of Ways

The CM turns against his mentor, Dr Mishra



Jagannath Mishra (left) and Bindeswari Dubey in happier times

It was an extraordinary somersault five months after being chosen by the Congress(I) to succeed Chandra Shekhar Singh as chief minister of Bihar, Bindeswari Dubey has parted ways with the man who was responsible for his choice Dr Jagannath Mishra. And with Chandra Shekhar Singh and Dr Mishra both aligned against Dubey, their estrangement seems complete.

For the chief minister, the parting must have been painful. But he hardly had a choice. The centre had told him not to depend too much on Dr Mishra despite his political clout in the state. Dr Mishra's own followers are convinced that the centre wants to see his wings clipped. And after the humiliation of their leader at the hands of Mr Dubey, they are very sore. They would rather work for Chandra Shekhar Singh than the present chief minister, they protest. All Dr Mishra's men whom Mr Dubey had recruited for key posts in his secretariat were ousted. Mantreshwar Jha, a supporter of Dr Mishra, who was made the CM's principal secretary, was transferred to the central cadre. But the man who received the worst treatment was Dr Mishra himself. He was ignored in the implementation of the 20 point programme in his own district, Madhubani.

Jagannath Mishra's lieutenant, Kamalnath Singh Thakur, told **SUNDAY** that he would still like the two leaders to work together since a tug-of-war between the two could weaken the party. Ironically, he too

was not spared by Mr Dubey who asked him to give up the chairmanship of the state's film development corporation on the pretext that the CM was against having MPs or legislators as heads of corporations and boards. But the CM did allow some MPs and legislators who were against Dr Mishra to hold similar positions.

Mr Dubey is aware of Dr Mishra's popularity among the Muslims. One of his first decisions as the chief minister in 1980 was to accord the "second official status" to the Urdu language in Bihar. Besides, he had

Uttarpara

alkrishna Public Library

set up a minority finance development corporation and published the judicial commission's report on the Jamshedpur riots of 1979. And to erode his base among the Muslims, Mr Dubey deliberately rejected the candidature of a Muslim, Fida Hussain Ansari, who was to have headed the state handloom corporation on the same plea, that MPs and legislators should not hold such positions.

Amidst these developments, Mahendra Mohan Mishra, a Rajya Sabha member and friend of Chandra Shekhar Singh, had a series of talks with Dr Mishra. Political observers here feel that the meeting was not without significance. "There is a section of central leaders including at least two of the Prime Minister's aides who still prefer Chandra Shekhar Singh to Dubey, then why not support Singh against Dubey?" asked a senior Congress(I) MLC. Incidentally, Mr Singh will complete his tenure in the Union cabinet as minister of state for textiles on 30 September as soon as he completes his six months without being a member of either of the two houses of the Parliament. In case no one vacates a seat for him in the Rajya Sabha, the centre is likely to "nominate" him for the position of the Bihar PCC(I) chief and consequently make him the chief minister again.

However, considering the party high command's attitude towards Dr Mishra, the new developments in the state which are apparently going against the CM might actually be a "doze of oxygen" for him as he has a better chance to survive in politics with the centre's patronage which necessitates a break up with the "super chief minister".

Yubraj Ghimire, Patna

KERALA

The Fight for Survival

Poor fishermen protest against exploitation by rich companies

For the traditional fishermen in the area, the coastal regions of Kerala was a happy-hunting ground. There was enough fish to be caught and enough money to be made. For two square meals a day. Life, though always difficult, was never depressing. But recently, their catch has been falling drastically, so much so that they are likely to lose their livelihood. The main reason for this is the activities of the rich and resourceful fishermen in the area who with their sophisticated methods, have been systematically exploiting

the "fish resources." This has led to overfishing. They also use trawl nets and purse seine nets which destroy the fish colonies.

Naturally, the poor fishermen have started an agitation. When the agitation developed into a confrontation between the rich fishing companies and the traditional fishermen, the government appointed the A G Kalar Commission to study the problems faced by the fishermen. The commission recommended:

- The reduction in the number of trawl boats from 3,000 to 1,145

Shrimp trawling during the monsoons to be restricted to the daytime and beyond the depth of 20 metres. Only trammel nets were to be used by traditional fishermen to catch shrimps within the 20 metre-deep zones.

A restriction in the number of motorised canoes (to 2,200) in order to help the smaller fishermen.

The Kerala government had accepted the report but it has not implemented any of the recommendations. Said Fr Thomas Kocherry, leader of the poor fishermen: "The government as usual made some promises but nothing has been done. These poor fishermen are being exploited. But it would be wrong to see this (the agitation by the poor fishermen) as a movement of the Catholic church. While it is true that priests and nuns are involved, there are many others too who are involved."

With the government failing to take any concrete steps, the poor fishermen have taken to the streets again. And it is here that they have faced opposition from the owners of motorised boats. In Quilon, for example, a procession led by Fr Thomas Kocherry was obstructed by the rich fishermen. In fact, any move by the government to help the poor fishermen is likely to be opposed by the rich fishermen who export a large part of their catch. The fishermen's grouse is that though a majority of them are Christians, the politically powerful church has not done much for them primarily because the church is often controlled by the rich with vested interests. Thus the



A Kerala fisherman

priests and nuns who champion the cause of the fishermen often have to cross swords with the bishops. In fact, when the agitation posed a major problem to the government, the bishops ordered the priests not to participate in the agitation of the fishermen. But Fr Kocherry did not bow down. In the November 1984 issue of *Theerashabdam* (The Voice

of the Coast), he lashed out at the bishops saying that the aim of the agitation, especially the hunger strikes, was not death. "Did not Jesus Christ go to Jerusalem knowing full well that death awaited him? It is this sort of sacrifice that all Christians should follow."

The new radical priests and nuns are fighting against the conservative church as well as the government. Fr Joseph Maria, a parish priest of Marianad, 25 km from Trivandrum, even tried to disrupt the working of the fishermen's cooperatives in the area organised by the Programme for Community Organisation Centre (PCO). The church which has always acted as the patron and middleman of the poor fishermen, resents the fact that the cooperatives have usurped their role. Said Eugene Coulas of the PCO, "The church has not lifted a finger to remove the everyday problems of the fishermen. It has used the people for strengthening itself and for achieving political gain." If such cooperatives thrive, it will be against the interest of the church which has even been collecting taxes from the fishermen.

The government is yet to take any action but it is hoped that there will be some sort of settlement soon. The traditional fishermen are determined they are not going to let *kadalamma* (mother sea) become the preserve of trawlers. As Dr U.K. Gopalan of the Institute of Oceanography remarks, "If the situation continues, fishermen will become extinct even before the fish resources become extinct."

Bino K. John, Trivandrum

TAMIL NADU

Return of the Crowd-puller

On 5 September Jayalalitha was reinstated as the propaganda secretary of the AIADMK by chief minister M.G. Ramachandran (vindicating the SUNDAY report published on 25 August). Though the reinstatement order was signed by party general-secretary S. Raghavanandam, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that the decision had been taken by MGR himself. Jayalalitha was forced to submit her resignation when she annoyed MGR by overstepping her prescribed limits by criticising the Congress(I) for ousting N.T. Rama Rao in August 1984. The official reason for her resignation was the new policy laid down by MGR that partymen would be allowed to hold

only one post. As the order still stands, one wonders whether Jayalalitha will now be asked to resign from the Rajya Sabha. It is just the sort of thing MGR would do to clip her wings in the wake of reports about her anti-MGR activities in Delhi. As an AIADMK MP, Jayalalitha has reason to go to Delhi quite often. By forcing her to resign from the Rajya Sabha, MGR would be able to ensure that she loses her important foothold in Delhi.

As stated earlier, the reason why MGR reinstated Jayalalitha as propaganda secretary is his need for a campaigner who can draw crowds in the forthcoming local polls which are scheduled to be

held on 18 October. The other factor is that, with Jayalalitha in a prominent position he can maintain a fine balance by keeping everyone on tenterhooks about her—the divide and rule policy—in which MGR excels. In the absence of Jayalalitha, supporters of information minister R.M. Veerappan had begun projecting him as the heir apparent to MGR. The CM, no doubt, took pleasure in this see-saw game. Along with Jayalalitha's elevation came MGR's decision to divert Veerappan of the information portfolio, which he had held ever since MGR assumed power in 1977.

Arjuna Prasad, Madurai



Ananda Margis performing the *Tandava Nritya* with human skulls on a street in Calcutta

Ashok Chakraborty

ANANDA MARGIS

A Plot to Kill Jyoti Basu

Security measures for West Bengal CM are tightened

"Ananda Marg plot to kill Jyoti Basu" screamed the headlines of Calcutta's newspapers on the morning of 27 August 1985. The dailies mentioned that the Left Front chairman, Saroj Mukherjee, quoting an intelligence report, had said that the Ananda Marg had hatched a plot in Nalanda, Bihar, to assassinate the West Bengal chief minister during one of his visits to Delhi. Reacting swiftly, the Ananda Marg, filed a defamation suit against the Left Front chairman. Said Acharya Sarvatmananda, the general secretary (administration) of the Ananda Marg Pracharak Sangha, "It is a deep-rooted conspiracy, to kill the Ananda Margis on a bigger scale than 30 April 1982 (when a number of Ananda Margis were killed at Kasba, Calcutta, by irate mobs)."

According to central intelligence sources, the Margis have been planning to assassinate Jyoti Basu since the early Seventies. Their hit list, prepared some time in June 1981 had Mr Basu's name in it. That month, the West Bengal government uncovered the plot following a tip-off by the authorities in Bihar. The Marg's running battle with the West Bengal government, and Mr Basu in particular, began after an incident in Purulia in March 1967, when Jyoti Basu was the deputy CM in the ruling United Front government. The Ananda Marg had been donated a 500-acre plot in Purulia by a local raja. But the

Margis also moved into the neighbouring villages, driving out the residents and constructing their own buildings. When the villagers intervened, they were beaten up and their belongings looted.

On the morning of 5 March 1967, thousands of villagers gathered in front of the Marg offices in Purulia, shouting, "We want the Anandamurtiji's (the head of the Marg, P.R. Sarkar) head!" In the clash which followed, five *avadhoots* (members of the Marg) were killed. P.R. Sarkar, however, managed to escape with his family. Later, the Margis alleged that the CPI(M) was behind the attack.

Relations between the CPI(M) and the Ananda Marg have deteriorated even further. According to intelligence sources violent incidents have been taking place frequently with the Amra Bangali, the political wing of the Ananda Marg, not giving up their pursuit of parochial aims. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) have kept a close watch on the activities of the organisation. Sometime in April 1971, six Margis who had left the organisation were murdered in the jungles near Jamshedpur. Soon after, 30 more Ananda Margis were killed. Uma Sarkar, the wife of Anandamurtiji, who had been kept in the dark about the murders was shocked when at the Dharma Maha Chakra of 1971 she heard of the deaths. Soon afterwards, she

along with Anandamurtiji's secretary, Vishokananda (who Acharya Sarvatmananda now alleges was a CBI agent) and a few other *avadhoots*, left the organisation after a heated argument with P.R. Sarkar. At the end of the year, on 29 December 1971, Anandamurtiji was arrested. He was charged with conspiring to overthrow the government and abetting the murder of six deserters. Later, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Margis, hearing what had happened to their leader, went berserk. In an effort to secure Sarkar's release they often resorted to extremist methods. Indian diplomats, foreign missions and other offices abroad became their prime targets. According to the Australian police, the Margis were involved in the explosion outside the Hilton hotel, Sydney, where Morarji Desai was staying during the Commonwealth Heads of Government meet in February 1978. Attempts were also made on the life of Mrs Gandhi: on 1 January 1980, when she was to address an election meeting at Ranchi, and again in August 1981 at Delhi. Both the plots were foiled. The Margis were also involved in the assassination of the former union railway minister, L.N. Mishra, and the abortive attempt on the life of the former Chief Justice of India, A.N. Ray. Meanwhile, the Marg engaged eminent lawyers like Sankardas Banerjee, Asoke Sen, Nageswar Prasad and Ram Jethmalani to secure the Marg chief's release. And, in October 1978, the Patna High Court finally acquitted Sarkar.

In West Bengal, the increasing tension between the Margis and the CPI(M) supporters culminated in the Kasba massacre on 30 April 1982

where 17 Ananda Margis, including two women, were brutally killed by irate mobs at different places in Kasba, Calcutta, within a kilometre of the Marg's global headquarters at Tiljala. The mobs were incited, it is believed, by a CPI(M) leader of the area. After rumours were heard that the Margis were lifting children from the streets of Calcutta. The incident created considerable embarrassment for the Left Front since it involved the CPI(M). Intelligent agencies investigating the incident later mentioned in their reports that the Ananda Margis in India and abroad were "agitated over the massacre." The report went on to add, "The militant sections of the Ananda Marg have

now been advocating the need for violent retaliatory action against the CPI(M) leaders including the chief minister of West Bengal."

Acharya Sarvatmananda refuted the allegations regarding the plot to assassinate Jyoti Basu. He ruled out the question of a plot being hatched at Nalanda since "it is our weakest base. There has been a slander campaign against us by the government, which fears our ideology." The three Margis who were implicated in the Hotel Hilton incident have been acquitted, said the Acharya. As regards the plot to kill Mrs Gandhi, one Ananda Margi was arrested in Bihar and taken to Delhi, he said. The avadhoot was kept in Tihar jail and

an attempt was made by the CBI to make him turn approver and all the charges have been proved baseless. "The CBI has lost every case against us," said Acharya Sarvatmananda.

Following the report in the papers, security for the CM has been tightened. According to the commissioner of police, B.K. Basu, security arrangements for the CM are being "strengthened." Entry into the protected area of Writers building has been restricted further and specially trained plainclothesmen have been deputed to throw a ring round the chief minister whenever he goes out to attend a meeting.

Henry Jacob, Calcutta

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

A Thorn in the Flesh

Border disputes impede normalisation of relations

Since 1980 the Chinese have been staking a special interest in normalising relations with India. There have been several rounds of official or diplomatic level talks between the two countries for this purpose. But the talks have hardly yielded any result because the border dispute between the two countries have remained a stumbling block in the normalisation of relations. The recent announcement, however, that the sixth round of Sino-Indian official level talks will be held in New Delhi from 4 November to 11 November is of greater import: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his Chinese counterpart Zao Ziang will meet in New York in October to attend the UN General Assembly session even before the talks begin in Delhi.

On 1 April this year, when the two respective embassies in Beijing and New Delhi celebrated the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Chinese PM in a message to his Indian counterpart, said that his country would like to work together with India towards "restoring Sino-Indian relations to the level comparable to that of the 1950s" — an obvious reference to the *Hindi Chini bhai bhai* days.

However, the Chinese have never been quite happy with the official level talks for the simple reason that the delegates have a limited scope. Recently, the Indian Prime Minister ordered a review of Sino-Indian relations to frame a long-term policy to

deal with different developments and the suggestions from the Chinese side to which India has been, of late, reacting. This became necessary when it was seen that in spite of the growing interest that the Chinese leadership has been showing for India, Sino-Indian relations have not improved sufficiently. During the five rounds of official level talks, the Chinese have tried to keep the border dispute issue out while trying to make a headway in other areas. The Indian diplomats at the talks, however, have thought differently.

These talks break up into four sub-groups after the plenary sessions to take up separately, the issues of the border dispute, cultural cooperation, scientific and technological exchanges, and the question of properties and assets (taken up in 1962), respectively. The Indians attach as much importance to the first sub-group as the Chinese to the others. But it is the Chinese who have been successful: frequent delegations have come to India to enhance trade between the two countries when the border dispute still remains to be solved. The Chinese minister for metallurgical industries was recently here to explore the possibility of using Guan ore for the Chinese steel mills. Besides this a Chinese delegation has visited New Delhi to share the expertise of the Indian exports council (SUNDAY 1-7 September). A few years ago, the Chinese had also approached the Indian hotel industry to share its knowhow.

While China has realised that no

amount of talks at the lower level will yield any result towards normalisation of relations as long as the border dispute remains, no Chinese leader in command in Beijing has visited India. It is natural for the Chinese premier to want to make a visit to India. At the same time, the Chinese value protocol: It is the Indian PM's turn now to visit (after Zhou En Lai visited India in 1960 no Indian PM returned the visit). Infact, the Chinese have already invited Mr Gandhi three times.

The Chinese premier told the Indian ambassador K.P.S. Menon that China wants to develop its relations with all its neighbours including India. But this cannot be acceptable as long as China attempts to extend its cooperation to Nepal and increase its influence in Pakistan by widening the Karakoram Highway India will remain suspicious. Ironically, since 1980, India's peaceful intentions have been appreciated by the Chinese leadership. Nothing has convinced China more about India's friendly intentions than the sincerity with which India has dismissed suggestions from different foreign agencies to instigate trouble in Tibet.

India still does not feel that the time is ripe for Rajiv Gandhi to visit China and, this is all the more reason why the meeting of the two PMs in New York is going to evince interest in the diplomatic circles. All the same, China watchers are of the opinion that the meeting in New York and the sixth round of talks in November is going to alter the course of the now four-year-long normalisation efforts which have not even been able to explain why the border at Nathula Heights in Sikkim should continue to have an elaborate network of fortifications on both the sides.

A Special Correspondent, Calcutta

STOCK MARKETS

Government Plays Bear

Prices fall but optimism fails to soar

Over the last few months the government and the stock exchange authorities have been using every weapon in their arsenal to bring down share prices. Steps taken included imposition of stiff margins ranging from 40 per cent to even 100 per cent, banning of trading in some scrips and intermittent unloading of shares by financial institutions.

But when all these steps failed to curb the rising trend in share prices, the government used its ultimate weapon: massive unloading of shares amounting to an estimated Rs. 100 crores by the public financial institutions. The operation began on 12 August and was at its peak for about a week from 16 August. Sporadic unloading continued till end-August. This gigantic operation was undertaken by the institutions with vengeance with the clear objective of pulling share prices down. Stockbrokers at major exchanges were instructed to sell without any lower ceiling on prices. The objective has, in fact, been achieved, given that the *Economic Times* share index collapsed from 519.1 on 7 August to 431.8 on 4 September 1985, a record drop of 17 per cent in only 28 days.

Obviously, the government felt that the stock markets were overheated and therefore needed correction. It apprehended that should a crash occur, investors as a whole—and thus the public interest—will suffer, in turn adversely affecting the investment climate. This may or may not have happened but, paradoxically, the massive unloading of shares by financial institutions seems to have boomeranged. Instead of building up investor confidence, it has shaken it.

The moot question is: were the stock markets in India really overheated or were share prices only trying to seek their true level in the wake of abolition of estate duty, reduction of wealth tax rates and liberalisation policies announced by the government? The backdrop is that yields on shares in India are still far lower than in developed markets. Many stockbrokers feel that before attempting to pull down share prices artificially, a comparative study of yields should have been made. "This clumsy attempt of the government to

bring down share prices has induced nervous selling by investors and it is difficult to find buyers even at this low level of prices," bemoans an old-timer in Lyons Range, Calcutta. The market sentiment is that while the possibility of a "few shares" getting higher priced "cannot be ruled out," this kind of massive operation to bring down share prices was "absolutely uncalled for."

Not only this, the new guidelines issued by the Controller of Capital Issues in respect of the public and rights issues of shares and debentures have been resented by the stockbroking fraternity. Under these revised guidelines—which are mandatory in all but name—underwriting commission has been slashed, payment of mailing expenses and incentives has been totally banned and supply of stationery (e.g. application forms and prospectuses) to sharebrokers has been drastically curtailed. The remuneration allowed to merchant bankers has also been

reduced and issue expenses have been pegged.

Predictably, stock brokers are sore. For over a decade, many of them have built up large networks of sub-brokers in semi-urban and rural areas. One apprehension is that as a result of the drastic curtailment in the supply of stationery, stockbrokers will not be able to supply application forms to their sub-brokers and consequently the sub-broker network will collapse. Also, no mailing will be possible to clients. A likely fallout feared is that prospective new entrants to the capital market will divert their funds elsewhere and getting them back into the corporate finance fold subsequently will be extremely difficult. Inevitably, the kind of restrictions imposed will only give rise to undesirable practices.

Is there a need for government to tinker with free market forces in respect of stock and capital markets? On the one hand, the government talks of removing controls and on the other, it interferes with free market forces in precisely those areas where such interference is least called for. In the process, the growing capital and investment market in the country might well get irretrievably damaged.

A Special Correspondent

BANKING

Blow Hot, Blow Cold

Officers threaten to strike but agree to talk

On 30 August, bank officers' representatives began negotiations with finance minister V. P. Singh to sort out a gamut of issues on which they have been agitating for some time. Agreeing to sit down for discussions is in itself a comedown for the militant officers who were blazing fire and brimstone not too long ago.

This volte face occurred on the heels of the bank officers' strike on 13 August. The All-India Confederation of Bank Officers' Organisations (AICOBBO) suddenly turned soft at its conference concluded in Madras on 19 August and adopted a resolution "appreciating the gesture" of union finance minister V.P. Singh in "agreeing to hold discussions with an open mind" with its representatives. But the AICOBBO general body also blew hot in the same breath and authorised the executive committee "to take

appropriate decisions for any action including an indefinite strike" should talks with the finance minister not yield "satisfactory results."

It, therefore, seems likely that bank officers and the government are heading for a confrontation in the coming months unless, of course, the finance minister concedes their demands. These relate not only to the revision of the wage structure but also to bonus, pension, a five-day week for banks, restructuring of industrial relations between the Indian Banks' Association and AICOBBO, parity in terms and conditions of service for private sector bank officers and a comprehensive industrial relations law for management and professional employees. The AICOBBO, along with two other organisations—the All-India Bank Officers' Association (AIBOA) and the Indian National Bank Officers' Congress



Public sector banks: customer service takes a back-seat

(INBOC)—are seemingly determined to “rerod their protest” against alleged delay and indecision on the part of the union government in redressing their grievances. Unfortunately, the situation has been allowed to drift to such an extent that officers are militating in terms of “an indefinite strike” to press their demands.

As it is, the strike on 13 August caused immense inconvenience to the public all over the country. Banking activity was virtually paralysed because officers of private sector, cooperative and foreign banks also joined the strike. Clearing operations in the Reserve Bank were suspended, too. The vice president of AICOBBO, S R Sengupta, described the strike as “the spontaneous manifestation of bank officers’ grievances against the arbitrary policy being pursued by the central government in regard to the implementation of their revised pay structure.” The vice-president of the All India State Bank Officers’ Association, Ardhendu Chaudhury, congratulated the striking officers and warned “Let the government take the correct message from it and act accordingly.” According to this association, granting wage revision to 6.5 lakh clerical bank employees with effect from 1 July, 1983 on the one hand and forcing 2 lakh officers to accept a unilateral wage settlement from only 1 July, 1984 on the other was an “open display of step-motherly treatment.”

Incidentally, recently the Singapore government has strongly criticised the three Indian banks operating there, viz, Indian Bank, Indian

Overseas Bank and United Commercial Bank, for giving wage increases to their staff, ranging from Rs 80 to Rs 133. Ong Teng Cheong, second deputy prime minister and secretary general of the government sponsored National Trade Union Congress of Singapore, observed caustically that these banks have acted “shamelessly” by increasing the wages of their officers. Using strong words, he said that “if the managements of these banks do not wake up quickly and make good the serious error of judgment they have committed and continue to be irresponsible and unthinking, then the entire labour

movement in Singapore would have to teach them a lesson the hard way.” He “hoped” that these banks would reconsider their decision “before it was too late.”

The backdrop to this is that the National Wage Council had recommended a three to seven per cent rise in wages but the Singapore Bank Employees Union decided not to accept this offer because of the downturn in the country’s economy. By unilaterally making higher payments to executives and officers, the Indian banks have invited criticism for “mocking at the junior cadres who have so selflessly consented to forego theirs.”

In India, though, the interests of the national economy are seldom—if ever—given selfless consideration before agitations are launched by trade unions. The three bank officers’ organisations would do well to mull over the happenings in Singapore. They would also do well to recognise that there is increasing dissatisfaction all around with the working of public sector banks where service has worsened from bad to abysmal.

The successful implementation of the Seventh Five Year Plan will depend to a large extent on the discipline and dedication of those who work in the nation’s banks. The atmosphere of hostility that prevails in the banking sector is certainly not conducive to its efficient functioning. Hopefully, the talks begun on 30 August will break the ice.

R. J. Venkateswaran, Calcutta

INDUSTRY

Forward Policy on the Anvil?

The 1956 resolution is no longer sacrosanct

Industry has always complained that government policies are unpredictable and ephemeral. It is impossible to predict, so runs its lament, as to what whim or fancy might cause a certain directive to be changed, affecting the well laid out plans of an entrepreneur. Industry has also often chafed at the wide ranging—often unexpected—changes which come about when the Five Year Plans are drawn up.

Perhaps, as a response to such criticism, or may be merely in keeping with his attempts at liberalisa-

tion, the Prime Minister has asked the industries ministry to study the feasibility of having a ten to twenty year “forward plan.” This, he believes, would bring about a semblance of stability in industry, specially in those areas where long-term projections are made by the units as must necessarily be done when the gestation period is a long one.

The Prime Minister, while reviewing the working of the industries ministry last month floated this idea and suggested that if a measure of “stability” is brought about in the

planning process this might result in better productivity. Expansion and resource mobilisation would be easier. The meeting was attended by the union minister for industry and company affairs, Veerendra Patil, the union minister of state for industry, Arif Mohammed Khan and the four secretaries attached to the ministry. Reportedly, the ministry officials were asked to outline an industrial policy which would fit into a long-term plan. A discussion was also held to find out the methods for implementing such a plan.

Interestingly, parliamentary secretary Arun Singh, supposed to be one of the brains behind the Prime Minister's economic thrust, suggested that the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) needed to be "re-

framed" keeping in view the forward plan. The IPR has been so far the basic document of the union government for policy decisions on industry. It is now likely to come in for some upheaval because, as Arun Singh put it, a lot of changes both in the economic and technical fields have taken place in India and abroad since 1956.

The finance minister has stated in Parliament recently that some changes in the IPR were being "conceptualised." No one expects any drastic shift, but Rajiv Gandhi seems to be moulding policies more in the light of what he thinks to be correct. Despite protestations of "continuity," a departure is visible—and more is likely to come.

Hardev Singh, New Delhi

INFRASTRUCTURE

No Jam Tomorrow?

Smooth traffic in Calcutta remains a mirage

Although 295 years old, Calcutta is by all means still a young city, it has already fallen prey to the ravages of a geriatric disease—sclerosis of its arteries and severe impairment of circulation. In tandem with the steep rise in population, thanks largely to the post-1947 influx of refugees, the number of vehicles in the city has gone up by leaps and bounds to about 1.7 lakhs at present. Yet, roadspace—the city's arteries—has remained virtually the same, causing the sclerosis to set in. Thus, to compare, while as much as 23 per cent of the surface area of the city of New Delhi consists of roads, the corresponding figure for Calcutta is a miserable six per cent. And this compares quite unfavourably with Bombay's statistic of 18 per cent, too.

Meanwhile, traffic congestion in the central districts of the city has degenerated from the disorderly to the chaotic, with violation of traffic rules going up at the rate of 11 per cent per month. So far, the authorities have only tinkered with the system, half-heartedly restricting the movement of trucks and slow-moving vehicles like rickshaws and handcarts, fining offenders on the spot, realigning certain heavy-density traffic routes to one-way at rush time and so on. Predictably, the effect has only been marginal, with the basic problem continuing and even taking a turn for the worse.

It is this process of slow strangula-

tion that the "traffic management week," which began on 12 August, wanted to reverse. Perhaps, realising that little could be done immediately to solve the problems of insufficient road space, congestion and lack of infrastructural facilities, the Association of Indian Engineering Industry (AIEI) and the Calcutta police—who jointly conducted the week-long effort—pitted their efforts on teaching motorists and pedestrians the importance of obeying road safety measures and traffic rules.

Yet, throughout the week, there was little improvement in traffic conditions in downtown Calcutta. Despite the sound and occasional fury of hapless traffic constables, cars

Traffic in Calcutta: chaotic



continued to inch forward on the major thoroughfares during peak hours and pedestrians—as usual—spilled over on the carriageway while hawkers still hogged the pavements. The much publicised "special arrangements" made specially for the traffic week also came a cropper. Many of the blue and white traffic control booths set up at major crossings remained unmanned for long hours. Even when they were manned, the announcements from the booths were barely audible above the din of traffic and only added to the decibel level. The move to use volunteers to control traffic was even less successful. On the first day—and this set the trend for the rest of the week—only about 50 volunteers turned up for duty from amongst the 400 young men and women who were expected to take up positions at 40 vital street crossings to help both motorists and pedestrians.

But perhaps the biggest failure of all was that one major objective—creating public awareness—flooded. "How can a week's haphazard efforts help?" asked the typical sceptical citizen. And, even as the traffic management week drew to a close, it was fairly obvious that all the huffing and puffing had been in vain.

Of course, not everyone was prepared to admit defeat. "We firmly believe that the traffic problem is not beyond a solution," said Rajive Kaul, eastern regional chairman of the AIEI. Kaul produced a report based on spot surveys to prove his point. The recommendations made in this report include introducing more one-way routes, creating a ring road route à la Delhi and constructing a Rs 3 crore elevated pedestrian walkway 3 km long connecting the business district with Sealdah, the city's main railway station south of the river Hooghly. Implementation of these and other measures, say AIEI planners, will cost "only Rs 10 crores" but would mean goodbye to traffic jams in the heart of the town.

Unless urgent measures are taken, warn town planners, the chaos in Calcutta's streets will only worsen. For, by the turn of the century, the number of commuters will rise to 11 million from about 6.5 million in 1984 and the number of vehicles will increase to over three lakhs. By all accounts, the thoroughfares will then be clogged for long hours with bumper-to-bumper traffic. But if the flopping of the recent traffic management week is any indicator, the often fatal disease of arteriosclerosis might well claim yet another victim: the city of Calcutta.

Srinjoy Chowdhury, Calcutta

At a Glance

DIVIDENDS

India (India): Announced a final dividend of ten per cent. This makes a total of 25 per cent payable on the paid-up capital for the year ended 30 June 1985, and works out to 50 per cent distribution on the old capital as against a total of 45 per cent paid last year.

Trade Wings: Again skipped dividends for the year ended 31 March 1985.

Kadri Mills: Coimbatore-based company stepped up equity dividend from 12 per cent in 1983-84 to 15 per cent for year ended 30 June 1985.

IDL Chemicals: Hyderabad-based company announced final dividend of Rs 1.50 per share, making total dividend of Rs 2.50 per share (Rs 1.00) for the year ended 30 June 1985.

Mahavir Spinning Mills: Keeping dividend unchanged at 12 per cent for the year ended 31 March 1985.

Loyal Textiles: Proposes dividend of 15 per cent.

Rose Mukerji Finance: Board of directors recommend 21 per cent dividend.

J.J. Exports: Proposes equity dividend of 15 per cent for year ended 31 March 1985.

Multitech International: Recommends payment of maiden dividend of ten per cent for year ended 31 March 1985.

Tycoon Tea: Proposed ten per cent dividend on equity capital for the year ended 31 March 1985.

ISSUES

United Leasing: Entering capital market on 15 September 1985 with public issue of 70,000 secured redeemable non-convertible debentures of Rs 100 each and 3.5 lakhs equity shares of Rs 10 each, both for cash on par. Terms of issue provide for simultaneous allotment of 35,000 shares with every debenture.

Asian Paints: Fixed 1 October 1985 as record date for making bonus issue one share for one basis. The scrip is being quoted on ex-bonus basis on Bombay Stock Exchange from 7 September.

Turnkey International: Coming to market on 16 September with public issue of 3.56 lakh equity shares of Rs 10 each at par to raise a part of the finance required for purchase of machinery and equipment.

First Leasing Company of India: Equity shares at a premium of Rs nine per share and non-convertible debentures aggregating to Rs 5.07 crores on rights basis to existing shareholders and employees.

Standard Medical Leasing: Equity shares of Rs 24 each linked to non-convertible debentures of Rs 3.24 crores on rights basis to existing shareholders.

Phosphene Industries India: Equity shares of Rs 10 each of which Rs 12 crores will be offered to public by prospectus.

Rajasthan Petro Synthetics: Will come out with public issue of Rs 4.45 crores.

RESULTS

Food's Healthy: Gross profit for the year 1985: Rs 4.65 crores (Rs 3.52 crores) following a reduction of Rs 55.37 crores (Rs 45.55 crores).

Brooke Bond: Turnover in 1985 year ended 29 June 1985: Rs 364.28 crores (Rs 322.59 crores).

Profit before tax was Rs 19.5 crores (Rs 17.21 crores). Recommended: 25 per cent dividend on equity shares.

IRP Co: Turnover of company rose to Rs 571.82 crores (Rs 508.20 crores). Pretax profit: Rs 5.19 crores (Rs 5.77 crores).

Tata Vedagawa: Turnover in 1985 stood at Rs 18.94 crores. Profit after tax: Rs 88.6 lakhs. Dividend: 15 per cent, subject to tax.

Union Carbide: Profit for the year was Rs 15.31 crores before tax (Rs 14.77 crores). Sales at Rs 223 crores were six per cent higher.

PRODUCTS

United Leasing: Has entered into agreement for leasing imported Skoda Generators in India. It also has plans to give on lease imported printing machines, excavators, computers, vacuum loaders and systems.

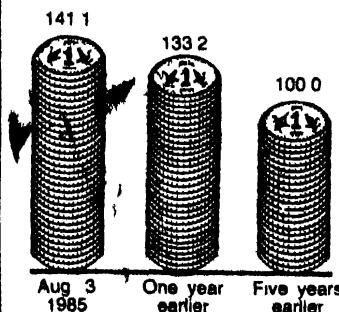
Hindustan Electro-Graphite: Delhi-based company making running graphite electrodes, now diversifying into newsprint and ceramic apparatus, insulators. Reported: first newsprint unit in India to be in process on deinking or recycling of waste newspapers.

SHARES / TOP TEN

	1985		Opening market quote on Sept 9 Rs
	High Rs	Low Rs	
ACC	595 00	385 00	536 00
Birla Jute	88 75	57 70	79 50
Brooke Bond	82 00	47 00	61 00
Calcutta Electric	25 25	11 95	21 50
Dunlop	48 75	22 30	44 00
EI Hotels	53 00	25 25	46 00
Guj. State Fert	790 00	537 00	705 00
Hind Motors	85 50	31 81	72 60
IEL Ltd	73 50	32 80	57 25
Telco	980 00	409 00	760 00

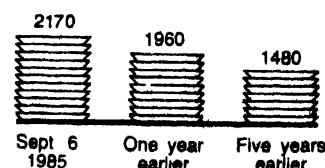
Note: The most actively traded shares last week

DEARNESS LEVEL

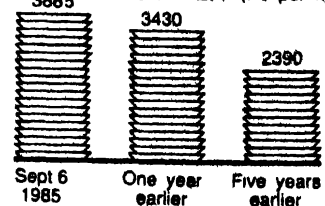


Note: Based on wholesale prices of selected essentials

GOLD (Rs per 10 gms)



SILVER (Rs per kg)



Source: Bombay Bullion Association Ltd

Chart by Nilratan Marly

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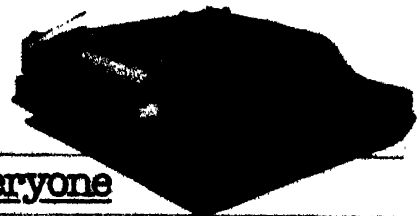
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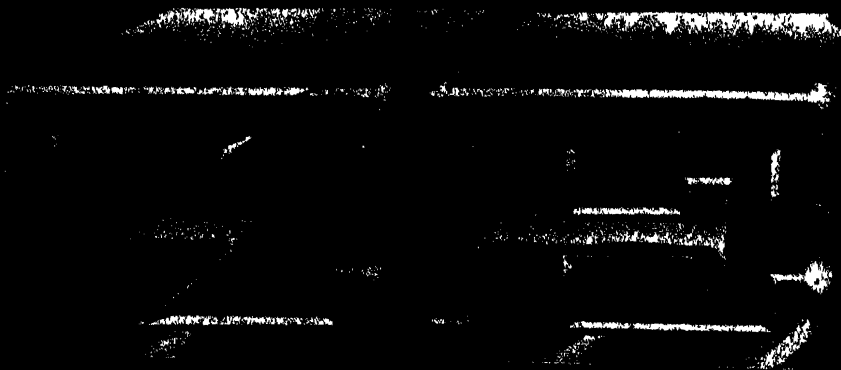
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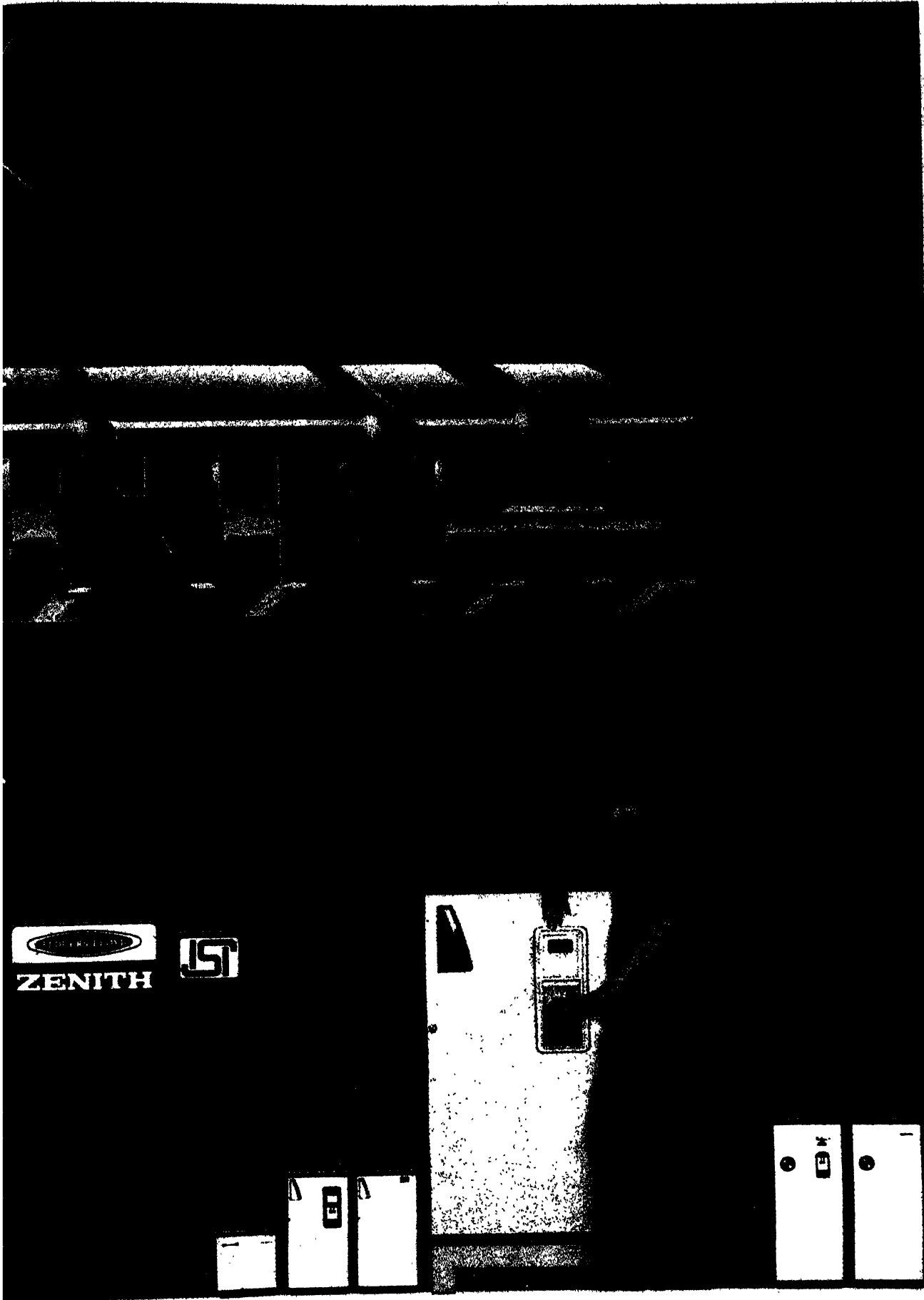
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Anooradha: Independent

Marc Zuber and Anooradha Patel have decided to call it a day, ending a three-year-old affair. Reason: despite a non-existent career she feels that there is more to life than sitting at home and pandering to Marc's wishes. Marc who has been keen on finding himself a wife who is not career-conscious, will have to start looking for a suitable partner all over again. Meanwhile, Anooradha is patiently awaiting the completion of her film, *Rukhsat*, being directed by Simi Garewal. It is on the sets of this very film that the two first met and fell head over heels in love with each other

Remember Deepak Parashar who was not so long ago the leading model in the country and who after his entry into films, courtesy B.R. Chopra, almost passed into anonymity except for the occasional film or two? *Nikaah*: the film in which he had acted along with

two other newcomers, Raj Babbar and Salma Agha, turned out to be the beginning of the end for Deepak's career. While Raj Babbar and Deepak both ran a parallel race for sometime, Raj soon overtook him and Deepak was saddled with second rate roles in B-grade films. Things took a turn for the worse when there was talk about his being a homosexual. His career nosedived and so did his personal relationships with model Anita Reddy and actress Shoma Anand. Recently, Deepak tied the wedding knot when he got married to Sarita, who is not from the film industry.

Twelve years ago, Prakash Mehra had been at the receiving end of Raaj Kumar's invectives. Now, everything seems to be forgotten. He thinks nothing of signing on the eccentric actor for one of his films and that too at a fabulous price. People who have been around in

the industry still remember the day when Raaj Kumar called the director, who has had many hit films to his name since then, "an idiot who does not know his job." The role that he turned down was later played by Amitabh Bachchan, then a lesser known star. The film was *Zanjeer* and the rest is now history.

Anita Raaj seems to have set the film industry on guessing games. Three months ago she was painting the town red with director Sunil Hingorani

and excitedly claiming that he was the man in her life. But time passed and she was soon heard saying that Sunil was nothing more than a good friend. She even said that all stories about their affair was just a publicity stunt. And yet rumours about their rendezvous at odd hours made the rounds. Now Anita seems to have changed her mind once again: she is seriously thinking of marrying Sunil when the right time comes. Whether Anita will stick to her decision this time, only time will tell.



Anita Raaj: Fickle-minded

UK's First Asian MP?

With a little bit of help from Lady Luck, he could soon become the first Asian to hold a seat in the British Parliament. The 46-year-old Uganda-born Praful Patel, who prefers to be called an "overseas Indian," has been active in the industrial scene in India too. Patel's suggestions that a conference of non-resident Indians be held and the Andaman and Nicobar islands be converted into a free port seems to have finally caught the eye of the finance ministry. His reputation as a champion of the Asian community in London and an advocate of human and civil rights clinched him the Labour Party ticket of the prestigious Brent North constituency for the 1987 general elections. Till the campaigning begins, Patel will keep himself busy lobbying with officials in the Indian finance ministry.



Patel: voice of the Asians

Lone Crusader

Shib Shankar Chakraborty is a Calcutta lawyer with a difference. Unlike other lawyers who charge a fee for fighting a case, he not only pays for the litigation of his clients, but also for their transport and lodging charges. His is a relentless struggle against the injustice meted out to rape victims, lost or abandoned girls who have been languishing in jails for years for no crime of their own.

Silent Service

It fires its members with a will that seeks to conquer disability and an imagination that makes silence eloquent. Silence, a Calcutta-based organisation, helps the deaf, dumb and even the disabled to become "contributing members of society." Formed in 1977, it started

with four deaf and dumb artists of the Government Art College who designed, painted and sold greeting cards. Today it gives expression to the dreams of more than 30 people through its greeting card, screen printing and marketing projects, providing each one of them with an average income of about Rs 300 per month.



The inmates of Silence: brilliant work

The Next Act

MGR in Tamil Nadu and MNTN in Andhra Pradesh have shown the way to the highest seat of power one can aspire for in state politics. Kannada matinee idol Rajkumar seems to be taking his own sweet time in taking the final leap into the rough-and-tumble that is politics. However, as far as cinema is concerned, he is undoubtedly the ageless actor: his *Jwalamukhi*

which is currently showing to packed houses in Bangalore has been fraught with problems. First, it was irate fans who stoned the movie halls, because the tickets were not being issued on time. Second, the movie houses remained closed for a week following a strike by cine workers. Luckily the strike was called off in time for the release of *Jwalamukhi*, as the workers feared the wrath of Rajkumar's fans.

Fighting for a Job

"If I have committed a fault, then let them chargesheet me and hang me. But till I receive a reply, I will protest at the Boat Club and may die of starvation," says Vidya Prakash who was dismissed from the army nine months ago following the summary court martial for absenting himself from his duties as draughtsman for 45 days. Along with his family, he has started a protest on the lawns of the Boat Club in Delhi. Why does not the 31-year-old ex-armyman take up some other occupation till his appeal is registered? Retorted Prakash, "I know, once I start to sell bananas or begging for survival, I will remain a beggar for the rest of my life. Instead I will die here to remind the government of the inhuman treatment servicemen are given and the absence of justice."



Vidya Prakash with children

The Claim to Fame

He started his career as a small-time insurance agent and worked his way up to a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. J. Dholakia, a Rajkot-based insurance agent, carved for himself a niche in the prestigious tome for surpassing the international record for the largest insurance claims in any given year: crossing the Rs one crore mark for 17 successive years is no mean feat.

Success hasn't frowned upon him either: last year he was instrumental in releasing 79 girls who had been illegally detained in Calcutta's Presidency jail and the Rescue Home for Women at Liluah in Howrah district of West Bengal. Thanks to his efforts, a father was recently united with his long-lost daughter, Jyotsna Mistry, who he had thought was dead. According to Mr Chakraborty "What disillusion me most is that no one as yet has come forward to help me in my lone battle."



Chakraborty: one-man army



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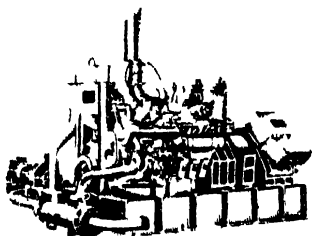


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Loveleen Mishra (Chutki of *Hum Log*) will soon make her debut in films. Govind Nihalani, director of the award-winning *Aardh Satya*, has signed her for his new film, *Aaghaat*. The film, for which the shooting is already complete, will be released in the

The Small Screen



Loveleen Mishra (bottom right) with the *Hum Log* family

near future. Loveleen, who is a first year student of history in New Delhi's Lady Shriram College, intends completing her graduation and also her shooting schedules for *Hum Log* and any film

which may come her way. But she is very choosy: "I shall take on films of only renowned directors," says she. Unlike Loveleen, Rajesh Puri (Lallu) has been signing on every film that comes his way.

Amin Sayani, the noted Aradio commentator, is planning a new serial, *Khari Khari*. Directed by Rajendra Bhatia and produced by Ved Rahi, it deals with a theme of social relevance. Comedy, however, is its main attraction.

Now TV viewers can have a taste of the German *Telematch*—*desi* style. Sponsored by Godfrey Phillips India Ltd. *Telegames*, shows different indigenously devised games, keeping in tune with the spirit of the German programme. In all, eight teams from different parts of Bombay took part, with the team from Bandra West lifting the trophy. The games will soon be shown on Doordarshan on a regular basis and organisers plan to hold *Telegames* all over the country. The idea is the brainchild of Roger Pereira, the chief executive of Shilpi Advertising.

Mrinal Sen has made his entry into the world of TV serials. His serial, *Many Faces of Love*, will be televised on the national network from May-June 1986. There will be 13 episodes, each a love story translated from Bengali to Hindi. The first epi-

sode, for which shooting began on 9 September, is based on a short story by Achintya Kumar Sengupta and features Aparna Sen and Girish Karnad. Noted



Mrinal Sen: new horizons

Bengali writers, whose stories have been selected are Rabindranath Tagore, Sunil Ganguly, Ramapada Chowdhury and Premendra Mitra.

West Bengal will soon have its very own TV serial. Presented by Gautam Ghose of *Paar* fame, *Bangla Galpo Bichitra* will bring Bengal's literary heritage to television audiences. Sponsored by Dey's Medical, the makers of pharmaceuticals, the serial comprises 13 selected short stories by contemporary writers like Ashapurna Devi, Shirshendu Mukherjee, Sunil Ganguly, Premendra Mitra and others. Of the 13 episodes at least six will be directed by Gautam Ghose. Among the stories that have already been filmed are Bonophul's *Ain* and Sanjib Chattopadhyay's *Sofa-cum-Bed*.



Gautam Ghose: branching out



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Isn't it time we talked?



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FIBRE OPTICS

Communicating via Lasers

The wispy strands of glass are so thin they can easily pass through the eye of a needle. Yet they are replacing copper cables and revolutionising communications the world over. Made of exceptionally pure glass, the hair-thin optical fibres carry thousands of telephone conversations in the form of very fast streams of light pulses. The source of light is a laser no larger than a grain of sand. Laser is akin to a radio transmitter except that it emits waves in the optical frequency. Flashing on and off million times a second, the laser shoots a stream of light pulses carrying the messages. Trapped within the glass core, and travelling at the speed of light through several kilometres of fibre, the pulses arrive virtually "undimmed" at the other end where a detector, smaller than the thumb nail, translates the pulses back into sound or electricity.

This, in essence, is fibre optics communications, a new technology that has enormously increased man's capacity to move words, pictures and data from place to place. Quite simply, telephone conversations, television broadcasts, computer data, or any other message can be translated into light waves and sent through glass wires instead of the conventional technique of translating them into electrical impulses and sending them through copper wires. The information transmitted through optical fibre is in digital form, as pulses of light, much like those that might be used to transmit Morse code. Theoretically, 3,00,000 trillion pulses can be sent per second through the fibre but it has so far not been possible to switch lasers faster than 10,000 million times a second.

The enormous information-carrying capacity of glass fibre is due to the fact that light waves have a high "bandwidth" or, in other words, greater "room" to accommodate messages than electrical waves sent through copper wires. In fact, a single fibre can carry 30,000 telephone calls or 20 television programmes simultaneously or transmit the Bible in a tenth of a second. Optical fibre has other advantages too. While the world's supply of copper is running out, sand — the principal ingredient in glass — is just about endless. Being thin, more glass fibres can be fitted in crowded ducts under streets of

cities. While a typical copper telephone cable is eight centimetres thick and weighs four to 12 kilograms per metre, a glass cable would be a centimetre thick (mostly because of plastic filler) and weigh about 0.135 kilogram. Glass fibre is also easier and cheaper to maintain. Because electronic signals sent through copper tend to weaken over long distances, the telephone company must



The optical fibre cable used in telephone systems sheathed in polythene

install amplifiers every 2.5 kilometres to boost the signal. Light waves sent through glass fibres require no boosters for up to 50 kilometres or more. Optical fibres are not so vulnerable to high temperatures, need no insulation, are free from interference and there is no risk of electric sparks. Signals through glass fibre do not leak out, so there will be no cross-connections. The most attractive quality of glass fibre is that it is secure from wire

tapping, a distinct advantage for military systems.

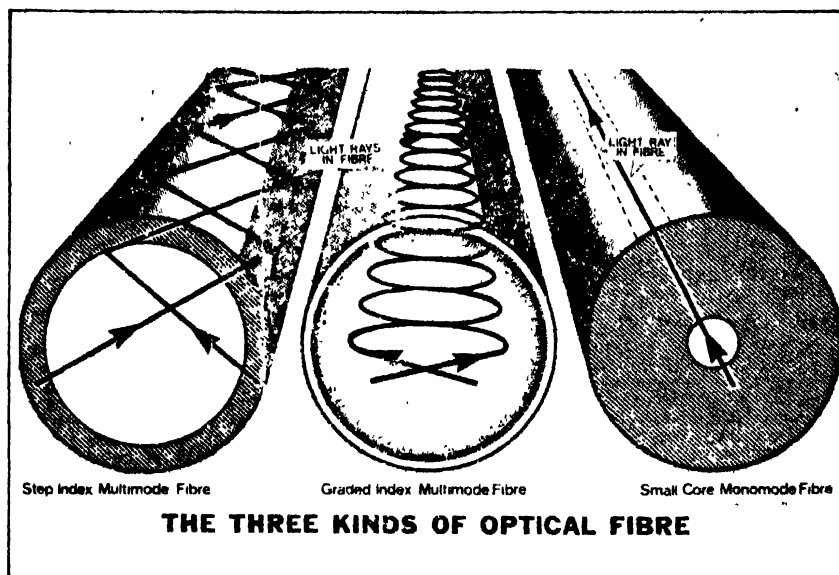
Optical fibres are already more economic than coaxial cables in trunk communications between cities and in junction networks linking local exchanges within a city. Eventually, optical fibre will be cheap enough to connect individual homes, bringing a wide range of services besides the telephone connection. These include cable television, teleshopping, banking, video games, video phones and access to data bases, all from a single glass fibre plugged to the wall. In fact, France is going ahead with its plan to wire up the town of Biarritz where 5000 households can receive radio, send mail to each other on facsimile, and shop from home. The Nippon Telephone and Telegraph is installing a multi-billion dollar fibre optics network in Japan to serve 10,000 subscribers. Some 350 subscribers in seven West German cities are being connected by a network of 2,000 kilometres of optical fibre cable. All new cables laid in Britain's trunk network since 1984 were optical fibre and at least one lakh kilometres of fibre will be installed in Britain by 1990. In the USA the entire east coast and ten other major cities have been linked with optical fibre, and the latest system using 'monomode' fibre went into commercial operation in New York in September 1983. Telecommunication authorities in the developing world too are beginning to place large commercial orders for optical fibre systems for use in trunk routes while submarine cable systems are on the verge of changing from coaxial to optical fibre. In India, the first optical fibre communications system was set up in Pune connecting Shivaji Nagar and Cantonment exchanges. Buried two metres underground, the glass fibre imported from Japan provides 120 telephone channels and has been functioning smoothly since 1979. With a projected fibre optics communication market of \$432 million by 1990, India plans to import the systems to cover a route length of 7,000 kilometres.

The first suggestion for using light to transmit sound was made about 100 years ago by Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone. In the photophone patented by Bell in 1880, sunlight—bounced off a reflect-

tor and focussed by a lens—was intermittently interrupted by a mechanism that vibrated in response to sound waves. At the receiving end, the pulsating light was converted into pulsating current by a selenium metal detector which has the property of varying its electrical resistance in proportion to light falling on it. A telephone receiver then recreated the original sound waves from the variations in the current. Bell's photophone remained a museum piece and a practical system for optical communications had to wait until the discovery of lasers in 1960. A source of intense light of one single wavelength, the laser was destined to replace sunlight in Bell's invention, but one major problem still remained: scientists did not have the right kind of pipe through which the laser light could be transmitted over long distances. This problem was solved in 1966 by Charles Kao, a China-born scientist then working with the Standard Telecom Laboratories in England. Kao, the acknowledged founder of fibre optics technology, showed that extremely pure glass could be used to transmit light. Four years later, Corning Glassworks, USA, produced the first glass fibre that carried laser light to a distance of one kilometre. Thus fibre optics—merger of glass fibre and laser technology—was born.

The physics of glass fibre is fairly simple. The fibre acts as a soda straw for light waves. The simplest form of optical fibre called 'step-index' fibre, is constructed with a core of dense glass surrounded by less dense material (cladding). Whenever the light passing through the fibre tries to leak out, it is reflected back to the core due to a phenomenon known as total internal reflection. (The same principle prevents a swimmer from seeing objects above the water's surface). Thus, light zigzags through the fibre bouncing back and forth the core-cladding interface. This 'step-index' fibre, however, has a major drawback: the zigzag travel reduces the sharpness of the signal as pulses elongate and do not reach simultaneously at the far end.

This problem has been solved by the 'graded-index' fibre. Its core is made in such a way that the density varies smoothly from a maximum in the central region to a minimum at the periphery. As a result, instead of zigzagging, the light rays travel in smooth curving paths. Thus its information content is less distorted. In the most recent and advanced form of fibre, the diameter of the core is reduced to (approximately) the



THE THREE KINDS OF OPTICAL FIBRE

wavelength of the transmitted light, about two-to-eight millionths of a metre. In such 'monomode' fibre, all light waves take a straight path reaching their destination simultaneously.

Making optical fibre is not the same as glass blowing. The conventional way of melting ingredients to make glass permits entry of impurities. Glass for optical fibre, which must be extremely pure, is made by vapour deposition process invented by Corning.

Even the best optical fibre does not act as a perfect soda-straw for light. The fibres do lose light due to absorption of impurities like iron which can detract from the performance of the fibre even if it is present at the rate of two parts per billion. For decades, glass chemists have been trying to decrease loss of light in optical fibres by increasing their purity. Light is also lost due to scattering by the presence of irregularities in glass that can be largely controlled during manufacture of the fibre. Some loss of light, may however, be unavoidable but these can be reduced by increasing the wavelength of light. This means that red and near infra-red light is more easily transmitted through fibres than blue or ultraviolet light. Thus a 'window' of wavelengths in the near infra-red between 600 and 1600 nanometres is now being used for communicating through optical fibres. (One nanometre is one billionth of a metre.)

While the development has been rapid in lasers and glass fibres, research is still on for improved switching systems by which information can be channelled to individual users. Another area of research is 'multiplexing' (presently each optical

fibre is coupled to its own laser). This would allow a single fibre to transmit signals from several lasers operating at different wavelengths. This would be the logical way to increase the already prodigious communications capacity of an optical fibre.

In India, research on fibre optics has been going on since 1978 in several laboratories. The Telecommunications Research Centre has developed a terminal equipment for a 120-telephone channel system. The Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi has a facility for testing fibres while the Instruments Research and Development Establishment in Dehra Dun has developed a variety of fibre optics components for defence. The Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute in Pilani has developed silicon avalanche diodes for detecting and decoding laser pulse at the receiving end, while the Defence Solid State Physics Laboratory in Delhi has succeeded in fabricating the gallium-arsenide lasers. The Central Scientific Instruments Organisation in Chandigarh has developed a machine for drawing glass fibres. A more sophisticated facility at the Central Glass and Ceramics Research Institute in Calcutta has already started producing small quantities of 'graded-index first-window' fibres.

For over two decades, doctors have been using glass fibres as probes to explore the interiors of stomach, bladder or colon and even remove a tumour without major surgery. From medical probes to communications, the thin glass fibre has gone a long way. Before long it will replace conventional cables in airplanes, power plant control system, assorted military hardware and also computers. □

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SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY

The Food Factor

A satisfying meal increases the urge to smoke a cigarette and the pleasure the tobacco provides, according to a study conducted by Dr Murray Jarvik, a psychiatry professor of UCLA, USA "When people try to stop smoking, the cigarette they have the most difficulty giving up, is the one following the biggest meal If you could cure people of wanting that one cigarette, you would go a long way towards stopping cigarette smoking," he said In rotation on three consecutive nights, four out of 12 smokers ate a solid meal of their choice, four had a liquid substitute and four had water Questionnaires showed that craving for and satisfaction from a pre dinner cigarette were the same for all but craving and pleasure for a post prandial cigarette was highest for those who ate a solid meal.

Fireflies: Providing the Clues

General anaesthetics are both valuable and potentially dangerous Limitations remain till scientists understand how they work Two British biophysicists seem to have made some progress in this direction Their first discovery was that the anaesthetics affected even the fireflies, blocking out the light This led Dr Nick Franks and Dr Bill Leib of Imperial College London, to question whether the human brain too had similar receptors like fireflies, causing a patient to lose consciousness Soon afterwards, they discovered that chemical changes in the anaesthetics that weakened or strengthened their effect on the human brain had an exactly parallel effect on the blocking of the luciferase (the firefly protein which causes the fireflies to glow at night) The scientists are now hoping that measuring the shape and chemical characteristics of the luciferase receptor in fireflies will give a clue to a similar molecule in the brain If this can be done, they will be able to pinpoint which part of the brain is affected by the anaesthetics, the scientists claim

The Endurable Drug

Australian researchers at Adelaide University say they have developed an oral vaccine that could help eliminate cholera as a major killer in Third World countries The single dose vaccine is expected to last a lifetime while the present intravenous vaccine lasts only about six months The oral vaccine has been tested on animals, tests on humans will begin in the US next year

Oldest Dinosaur Fossil

A team led by Robert Long of the University of California, Berkeley, recently discovered the fossilised fragments of the oldest dinosaur skeleton known to mankind The find, which was made in Arizona's Petrified Forest National Park, included dozens of other bones and an almost complete hind leg of the same species Robert Long said that the dinosaur must have weighed about 100 pounds, was the size of a Great Dane, and lived almost 225 million years ago It appears to be a direct if pint-sized descendant of the *condonts*, the giant reptiles weighing up to ten tons that lived at the end of the age of reptiles Unlike the large and powerful carnivorous dinosaurs, the little beast probably ate only plants as it waded through the swamps that covered Arizona in its heyday

VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 15 SEPTEMBER 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The stars foretell a bleak period for you. Businessmen should postpone expansion plans. Professionals should avoid disputes with those in authority. The financial front is equally disappointing. At home your wife may suddenly fall ill adding to your financial burden. Watch your health closely. However, this is a good period for marriage negotiations.

Good dates 17, 18 and 19

Lucky numbers 1, 5 and 9

Favourable direction North



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is a favourable week for courtship and marriage alliances. Some of you are likely to gain money through unexpected sources. Those in government service can look forward to a promotion. Students too will fare well in their examinations. Businessmen should carry on with their projects. A member of your family is likely to misunderstand you.

Good dates 16, 17 and 20

Lucky numbers 1, 3 and 9

Favourable direction North west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Social engagements will keep you busy this week but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health. An elderly member of your family may misunderstand you leading to a lot of unnecessary tension. On the professional front you will come in for severe criticism. However, on the economic front some of you may gain money.

Good dates 16, 17 and 18

Lucky numbers 1, 2 and 3

Favourable direction North



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is not a lucky phase for love and courtship. misunderstandings may lead to estranged relations. Domestic worries will continue to plague you. Enemies will be active during this period. Do not take even your close friends for granted. Your financial prospects however will look up but do not be extravagant and try to repay most of your debts.

Good dates 16, 18 and 20

Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9

Favourable direction West



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Lovers will find this period extremely favourable. Those employed in government concerns should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Businessmen are likely to face stiff competition. At home a member of your family may suddenly fall sick adding to your worries. Singers and performing artistes will win rare honours.

Good dates 15, 16 and 19

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 6

Favourable direction South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) There are bright chances for the unemployed of securing jobs this week. For those employed in the private sector a promotion or a posting to a place of your liking cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will bag lucrative deals. The home front will remain peaceful but an elderly member of your family may fall ill. A letter will bring good tidings.

Good dates 16, 19 and 20

Lucky numbers 3, 4 and 7

Favourable direction South east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a good week for professionals but if some of you are thinking of changing your careers do so only after consulting your elders. Lovers should avoid adventurous plans. The period is favourable for sportsmen and those in business utilize every opportunity that comes your way. At home your children will be a source of joy.

Good dates 15, 17 and 19

Lucky numbers 2, 3 and 4

Favourable direction South



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Lovers will find this period disappointing and they should take the advice of elders before executing plans. But this is an exciting phase both for businessmen and professionals. You should consult a doctor at the slightest indication of illness. Negligence may lead to complications.

Good dates 18, 19 and 20

Lucky numbers 2, 4 and 8

Favourable direction North east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Stellar influences make this an extremely favourable period for all of you. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. Friends and relatives will be very helpful. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business. A promotion cannot be ruled out for those in service. Do not neglect the health of your children. A busy weekend is forecast.

Good dates 15, 16 and 21

Lucky numbers 5, 6 and 8

Favourable direction North

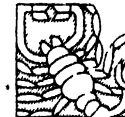


CANCER (15 July—14 August) Financially a profitable week lies ahead of you. Businessmen will be able to repay most of their debts. For those in service a promotion or a posting to a better place is in the offing. Prospects are also bright for gamblers and speculators. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. However, your children will cause a lot of worry for you this week.

Good dates 19, 20 and 21

Lucky numbers 7, 8 and 9

Favourable direction East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) All your efforts will be crowned with success this week. Professionals and businessmen will make steady headway but avoid speculative ventures. Students and creative artists will also find this phase favourable. If you are in love and intending to get married this is the ideal time to do so. At home your family members will give you a lot of happiness.

Good dates 15, 20 and 21

Lucky numbers 3, 5 and 7

Favourable direction West



PISCES (15 March—14 April) The week begins on a bright note for you. Businessmen will continue to be successful in their ventures and professionals are likely to get transferred to a better place. Some of you may even win a lottery or gain property through inheritance. A pleasure trip is in the offing and love and marriage are well scripted. You will tide over your family problems.

Good dates 16, 17 and 20

Lucky numbers 3, 5 and 6

Favourable direction South west

For those born between 15 October and 14 November

Outwardly you appear to be amiable, kind and polite. You appreciate whatever is beautiful, peaceful and harmonious. You are interested in the opinion of others but do not necessarily share their viewpoints. People born during this period have a fair sense of justice. You are essentially a lover of peace and often act as a mediator during disputes. A tendency towards laziness and procrastination can be discerned in you. Women born under this sign like to dress up and socialize.

**What's the good word for a colour television
that makes a Ravi Shastri out of your son?**



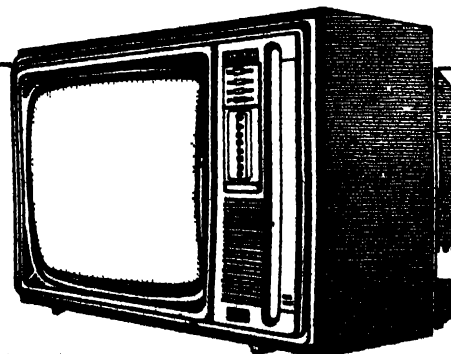
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VARIETY

THIS INDIA



MADRAS This is a story of a senior journalist who was saved from an embarrassing situation by a mere salute from a police constable. It all began at Broadway one recent night with the scribe boarding a Kumbakonam bound express bus. A little while after the bus had started on its journey, there was a commotion: a well-dressed young woman started sobbing as the conductor ordered her to get down if she did not have the money for her ticket. Tearfully, she told the passengers that she had been thrown out of her home by her businessman husband because she had not brought enough dowry and that all she possessed was a ten rupee note. The journalist offered to pay her fare of Rs 20 and everybody heaved a sigh of relief. But the next morning when the benefactor journalist was making his way out of the bus, he saw the woman coming towards him. Suddenly, the whole scenario changed with the woman charging and wailing that her husband was none other than the journalist himself. At this stage of the drama, the "saviour"—in the form of a uniformed police constable—materialised. The constable who had seen the journalist with police officers on previous occasions, greeted him with a smart salute. Making capital of the opportune entry by the constable, the journalist ordered that the woman be taken away to the police station. But sensing danger, she had vanished.—*Indian Express* (L. Jambukeswaran, Madras)

NEW DELHI Raja Sabha chairman R Venkataraman directed the secretary-general of the House recently to probe into the "comedy of errors" whereby a question which dealt with drought in the English translation referred to floods in the Hindi version.

The error came to light when some members like Kailashpati Mishra and Jagdamb Prasad Yadav sought to ask questions relating to flood relief and were not permitted on the grounds of asking irrelevant questions. At this, several members protested that the Hindi version related to flood relief measures and so the chairman permitted questions to be asked on "flood, fire, drought or anything else." While agriculture minister Buta Singh said there was possibility of a mistake either in his office or at the Raja Sabha secretariat, Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav had the last word when he asked how a government could function when it mistook drought for floods.—*Indian Express* (P Mohanraj, Bangalore)

BOMBAY Fourteen "pregnant" fisherwomen were found to be carrying bottles of foreign liquor, according to recent reports. In one of the biggest hauls of foreign liquor in recent times by the city police, 240 bottles of various brands of foreign-made whisky valued at Rs 80,000 were seized from the fisherwomen recently. The women were arrested on suspicion and brought to the police station where they were searched by women constables. The whisky bottles were found tied to their waist, chest, back and legs, the police said.—*The Times of India* (Ratnashree Neelaratna Javeri, Bombay)

NEW DELHI A book in Malayalam now being circulated among school and college students in Kerala, says Dr Rajendra Prasad was the food and agriculture minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet in 1966. Dr Rajendra Prasad was a cabinet minister only in the interim cabinet, and Mr Nehru died in 1964.—*Indian Express* (P R Sreedhar, Vellore)

COCHIN A Namboodiri family of nearby Tripunithura, once the seat of Cochin's erstwhile royal family, has been performing the *shraddhi* (death anniversary rites) of a pet parrot for the past two centuries. The story goes that Varkellil Krishnan Namboodiri's ancestor had a pet parrot which was free to fly out at will and come back in the evenings. One day, it so happened that when the parrot returned, its cage was closed. Without the safety of its cage, it was killed by a cat. Every year after that, the bereaved Namboodiris marked the anniversary by feeding 16 Brahmins. The family has continued the tradition, though the number of Brahmins has come down to four, who are also given a coconut, betel leaves, arecanut and ten paise.—*Indian Express* (J. Prakasom, Madras)

WITHOUT COMMENT

That is the doctor *babu* speaking—Jyoti Basu, commenting on Rajiv Gandhi's letter to the CM in which he mentioned that the state government had not done enough to promote tourist traffic.

I know how much affection you (Congress) have for my government. There is no danger to my government. If anybody has such a dream it will turn out to be a bad one—Ramakrishna Hegde, on the stability of his government, in *The Times of India*.



It will be a *kali* ministry and not an Akali ministry—Baba Joginder Singh, on being asked if the Akalis would be able to form a ministry in Punjab.

They (the opposition) are so used to tutoring each other that they cannot keep quiet for five minutes—Rajiv Gandhi.

Being out of power is not being isolated. Power is not the main stream—Jagannath Mishra, former Bihar chief minister, in *Indian Express*.

I am not afraid of terrorists. None of us is—H K L Bhagat in *Indian Express*.

I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, human or animal—Sri Lanka President J R Jayewardene, declaring his wish to make peace with Tamil terrorists.

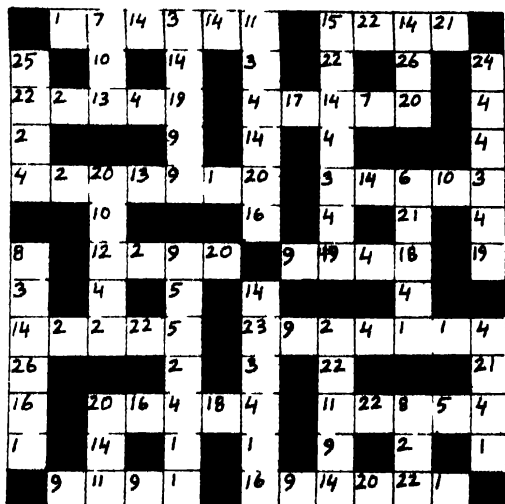
I am not this giant of a woman. I am just down here like everyone else—Singer Tina Turner in *Life*.

Every housewife wants to be a star and every star wants to be a housewife—Shabana Azmi in *Asiaweek*.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S												
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
A					D							

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start, three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest and complete the grid?

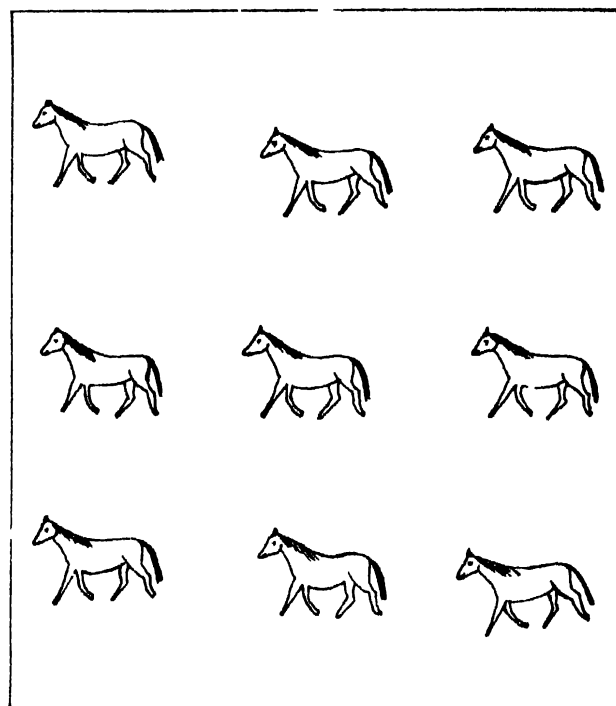
Word Power

LACE	[]	LUCK
BONY	[]	VERY
RANK	[]	ARABLE
OUNCE	[]	ALMS
VENT	[]	LOPE
ATE	[]	ACE

Here are some words with brackets between them. You have to fit a letter in the brackets which will convert the words to the right and left of the brackets into other words. The letter in the bracket becomes the first letter of the new word.

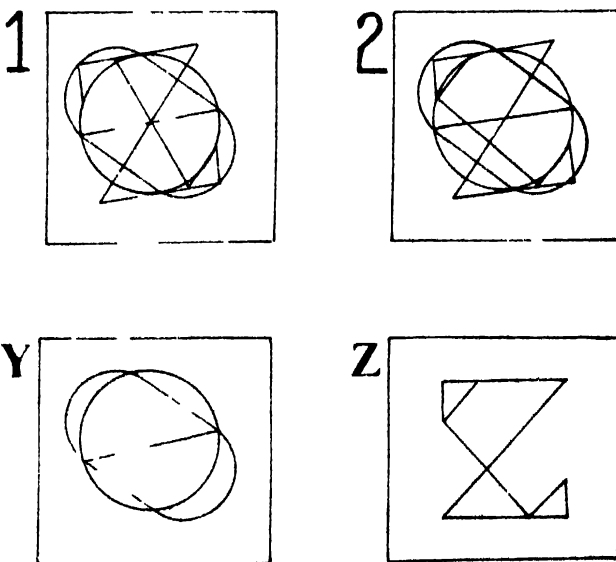
When you have finished, the letters in the brackets reading downwards will form a word. This is hot stuff!

Shape Sleuth



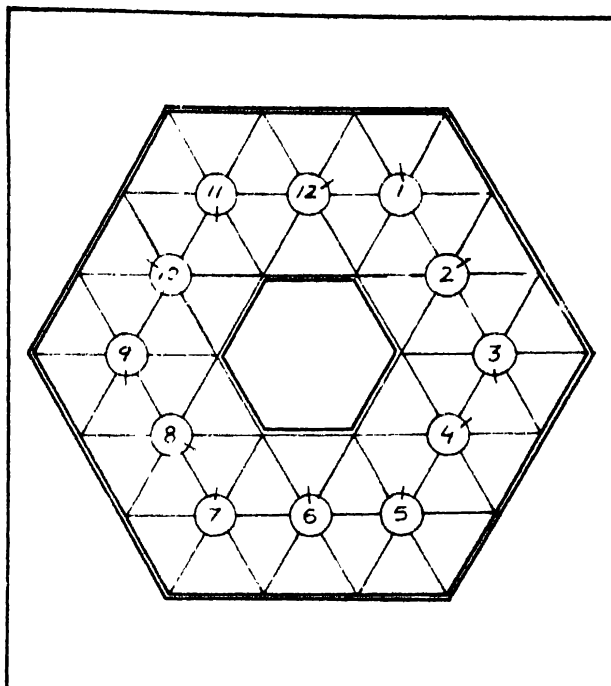
Here are nine horses in a square table. Can you, by building two more square enclosures, put each horse in its own stable?

Squaring Up



Which of the squares, 1 or 2 will be formed when the square Y and the square Z are superimposed?

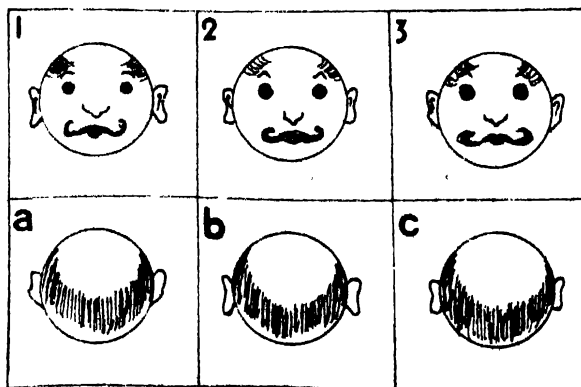
Word Play



This word maze will contain 12 words when completed, one letter per space, reading in either clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below:

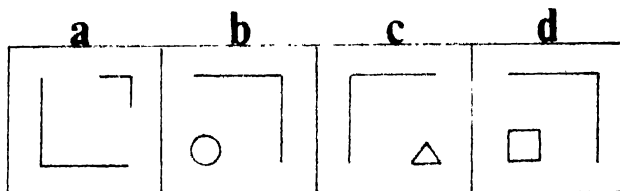
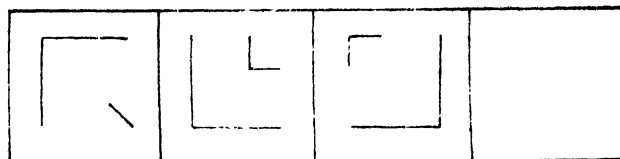
1. Twisted fringe gives a digit.
2. Abodes ignited to give pattern.
3. Sell again.
4. Give jumbled need in two rupees.
5. 'E' sized wrongly
6. Estimates or judges.
7. Defective.
8. Get soft from brief lab by-lane.
9. Cereal mixed up real in by.
10. Not shorter.
11. Rule or control
12. Change position again, to take away.

Matchmates



Here's an earful! Match these faces front and back.

Figure it Out



Can the series be completed with a, b, c or d?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Shape Sleuth: 16

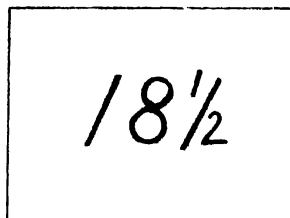
Word Power: Weave, Haste, Plant, Create, Feast, Heart, Bloat, Teasers.

Witsharpener: 90 paise Only the three links in the first chain need to be broken. With these the other four pieces can be joined together.

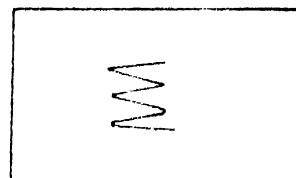
Word Ladder: SEA-BED, BED-ROCK, ROCK BOTTOM.

Auntly Oddities: My aunt is not quite as crazy as she sounds. She likes things whose name contains the letter 'S'.

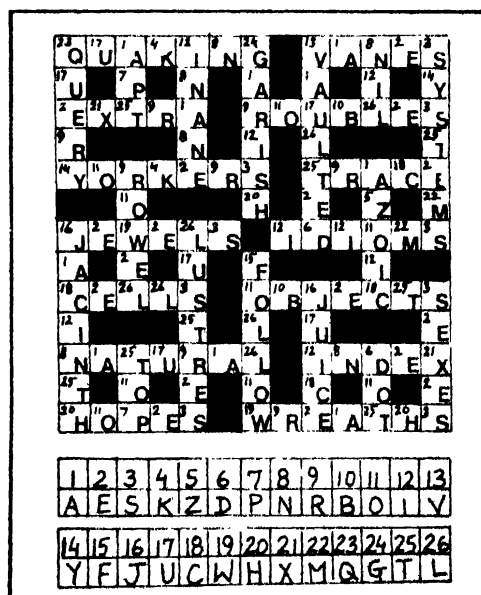
Figure it Out:



Look Again: The second column is the reverse of the first column.



Cryptocross:



VARIETY

CHESS

The first moves one learns in chess are invariably some kind of KP opening involving P-K4, B-QB4 and both knights developing on B3. Thereafter we grow up and move on to higher strategical planes with fancy names such as Ruy Lopez or Sicilian Defence. Graduation, however, does not necessarily imply mastery of the subject.

Despite their apparent simplicity the quiet KP positions conceal inner subtleties which even grandmasters can fail to come to terms with, as for example in the

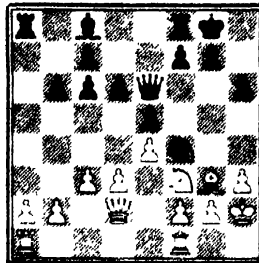
following game. White is completely outmanoeuvred in a type of position we might otherwise be tempted literally to describe as child's play.

White: Rantanen. Black: Razuvaev. KP opening. Helsinki 1984.

1 P-K4	P-K4	2 B-B4	N-KB3
3 P-Q3	N-B3	4 N-KB3	B-B4
6 N-B3	P-Q3	6 N-QR4	B-N3

A move of which I always approve. The doubling of the QNP's will give Black a beautifully compact structure.

Razuvaev (Black) to move



Rantanen (White)

7 P-B3 B-K3!

Again very instructive. The knights would combine very well with the clump of central pawns after 8 BxB PxN 9Nx8 RPxN.

8 B-QN5	O-O	9 BxN	PxB
10 B-N5	Q-K2	11 O-O	P-KR3
12 B-KR4	B-B1!		

An original way to break the pin 12. P-N4 would be too dangerous in view of 13 NxNP PxN 14 BxP followed by P-B4

13 P-KR3	Q-K3	14 Q-Q2	N-R4!
15 K-R2	N-B5	16 Nx8	RPxN
17 B-N3			DIAGRAM
17 ...	NxNP!		

Completing the strategical lesson. Black obtains two pawns for his piece and a slow but irresistible attack.

18 KxN	QxP+	19 K-N1	P-KB4
20 PxP	RxBP	21 Q-K3	B-K3
22 P-B4			

Unable to bear the possibility of ... B-Q4, but Black now obtains the tempo to introduce his last piece.

22 ...	QR-KB1	23 N-R2	P-R4
24 Q-K4	R-N4		

Renewing the threat of ... P-R5 If now 25 K-R1 B-N5!

25 Q-K3	R-B5	26 K-R1	P-R5
27 R-KN1	PxB	28 RxP	RxR
29 PxR	P-B4	30 K-N1	B-Q2
31 R-KB1	B-B3	32 R-B2	R-N5!
33 Resigns			

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Strong, but non-forcing. Two bids have been out of fashion since the days of the Lederer Two Clubs, although they make bidding much simpler than in most of the modern systems. The style is still played by some French pairs, as on this deal from a tournament in Djerba:

Dealer East Love all			
♠ -		♠ A J 6 5 4	
♥ A 9 8 6 3		♥ J 3 2	
♦ 8 6 4		♦ Q 7 3	
♣ K 9 7		♣ Q 10 3 2	
♠ 8 6 4		♠ 2	
♥ K 10 5 4		♥ K Q 8 6 4	
♦ 9 7 5		♦ A K J 10 9 5 2	
		♠ 8	
		♥ Q J 7	
		♠ A 10	

Le Royer and Stopps bid the North-South cards as follows:

South	North
2♠	3♥
3♠	4♦
4♠	No

West led the 5 of diamonds, which ran to the 7. Le Royer played off ace, king and jack of spades, discarding two clubs from dummy. This was a clever trick, because it tempted East to lead the king of clubs

when he was in, rather than a heart. The queen of diamonds was covered by the king and South reached this end position:

♠ -		♠ A J	
♥ 9		♥ 9	
♦ -		♦ -	
♣ -		♣ -	
♠ -		♠ -	
♥ K 9		♥ K 9	
♦ 10		♦ 10	
♣ -		♣ -	
♠ -		♠ -	
♥ 9		♥ 9	
♦ 8		♦ 8	
♣ -		♣ -	
♠ 10		♠ 10	

The lead of the last trump produced twelve tricks and a fine score.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

- Which newspaper was once called the *Daily Universe Register*?
- What is known as Colombian Gold?
- Schools are referred to as *alma maters*. What does *alma mater* literally mean?
- What is common to Bramley's Seedling, Granny Smith and James Grieve?
- Name the bird which the poet William Wordsworth described as the "croaker of death?"
- Which famous Hollywood actress was known as the Iron Lady?
- Ringggit is the currency of which country?
- Name the first demon to be slain by

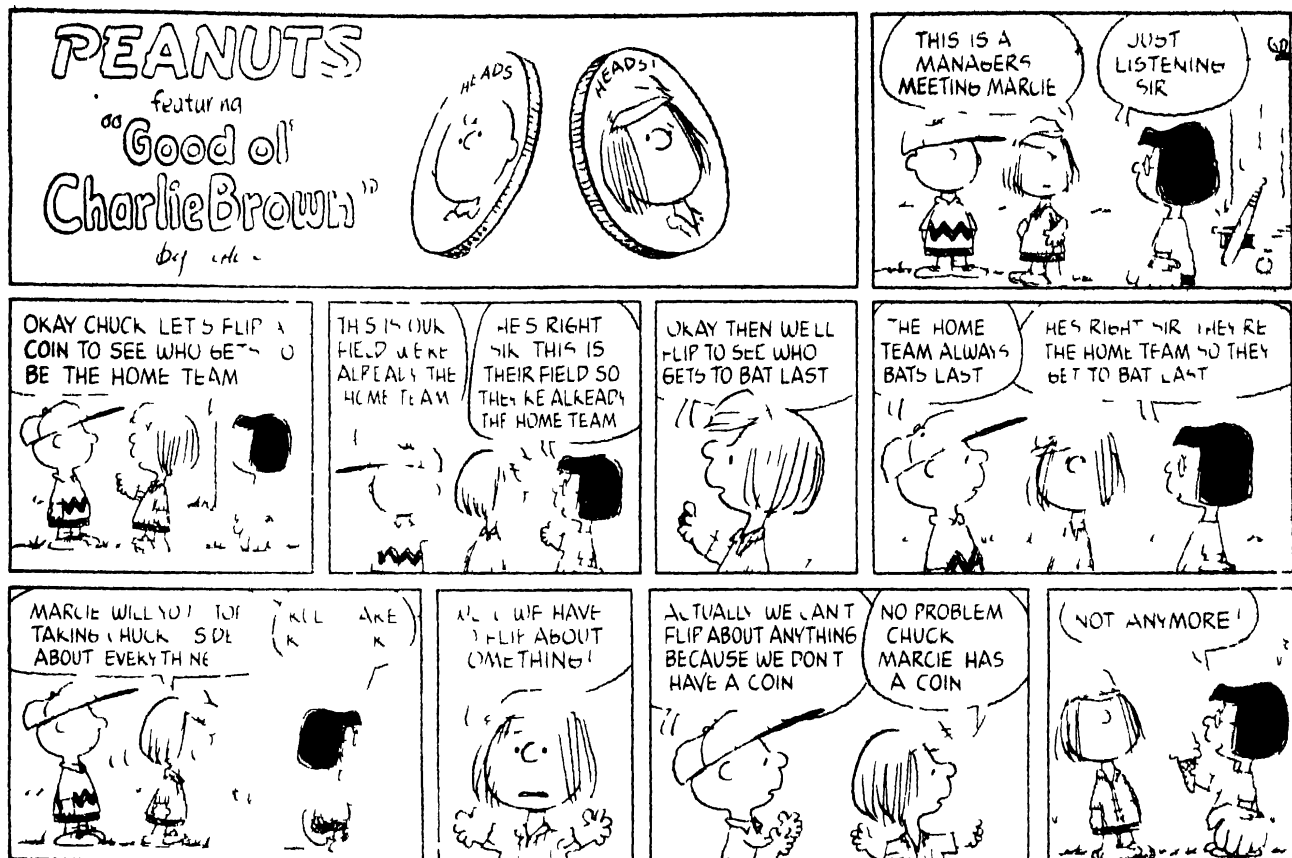
Rama in the *Ramayana*.

- Apart from India, two other countries celebrate their independence day on 15 August. Name them.
- Farewell to Cricket* is the autobiography of which famous Australian batsman?
- In the United States, what does the phrase "Meeting Mr Wrong" imply?
- Who lives in the Kuber palace?
- The well-known actress Sri Devi's first appearance in a Hindi film was as a child star. In which film?
- What is phenology the study of?
- What is the capital of Assam?
- In medical terminology, what is pyrenia?

16. Fever.

- The Times*, London.
- Marljuana.
- Foster mother.
- They are all varieties of apples.
- The raven.
- Greta Garbo.
- Malaysia.
- Taraka.
- South Korea and Bahrain.
- Sir Donald Bradman.
- Getting AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) a fatal illness.
- The President of Egypt.
- Julie.
- The study of skulls.
- Dispur.

ANSWERS



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Who Will Beard Raj Narain?



Raj Narain: what is his next mission?

Do you recognise this face? This is the face of the man who unsettled three Prime Ministers: Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai and Charan Singh. In the political wilderness for the time being, Raj Narain has shaved off his flowing

white beard and replaced the funny cloth bandana on his head with a red socialist cap. Raj Narain is known to grow a beard whenever he sets off on a new mission. How long will he remain clean-shaven?

"No Praetorian Guards"

Is the Prime Minister inaccessible to the common man? While a massive security ring surrounds Rajiv Gandhi in letter to a Congress worker in Bombay written on 23 July, the PM has denied that people are unable to meet him. Rajiv Gandhi wrote: "You have complained that people cannot meet me and their letters do not reach me. If this were so, where are the hundreds of persons I meet and write to

every day? You can take it from me that I have no praetorian guards surrounding me. I have to have staff but they are there to do my work. This canard about my being inaccessible is being spread by some interested groups and I am sorry that a member of our party should fall for it." After this rebuttal, will any Congressmen dare complain about being unable to reach the Prime Minister?

Daring Flight

The 29-year-old chief executive of Vayudoot, the third-level airline, took the civil aviation department by surprise on 1 September. Aizawl has been deprived of an air link since May 1984. A Dornier chartered by Vayudoot from Bhutan's Druk Air damaged its undercarriage while landing at the Aizawl airstrip last year. That ended the union territory's air link with the rest of the country. (Silchar in Assam is the nearest place from where people of Mizoram can catch a flight now after a seven-hour road journey.) Harsh Vardhan asked his chief pilot in Calcutta, Captain Sangar, if a Fokker F-27 could land at Aizawl and on getting an affirmative reply, the youngest ever public sector chief executive decided to organise a probing flight to Mizoram. The civil aviation department warned him against the proposal and even stated in writing that the flight

could be undertaken at Vayudoot's risk, with the DGCA taking no responsibility whatsoever. Harsh Vardhan told his staff in Calcutta that he himself would travel on the probing flight and if any mishap took place, he would also be involved. This peppeled up the spirits of Vayudoot staff and at 12.16 pm on 1 September a F-27 aircraft of Vayudoot landed at Aizawl. The airstrip at the Mizoram capital is of second-world-war vintage. It needs immediate repairs and the DGCA's warnings were not unwarranted. Yet Harsh Vardhan's daring initiative has ensured that soon a regular flight would start. Incidentally, Rs 96 lakhs have been spent recently on the Aizawl airstrip. While the runway is full of potholes, an impressive terminal building has come up. Did some one by mistake spend a major portion of the funds on the building alone?

High Places

It would be wrong to describe the first-term members of the eighth Lok Sabha as being "new," yet the Lok Sabha secretariat and the Indian Parliamentary Group feel that despite three sessions of the House, orientation courses ought to be conducted for the new members. New Delhi, the seat of the Parliament of India, is not

considered good enough as the venue for the course. Shimla, Ootacamund and Gangtok have been chosen for the courses for the "new" MPs, who will be taken to these picturesque venues in September and October. After all, MPs are entitled to be in high places. The altitudes of these hill resorts justify their choice.

Troop Carriers

Why were Indian Airlines flights delayed in the last days of August and early September? In most sectors (the worst affected was Calcutta) the flights were delayed by four to five hours. The civil aircraft had been diverted for ferrying troops to Punjab from the north

east. For many nights, the Guwahati airport received two additional Airbus flights, around 11 pm and 1 am, which came in empty and left with para-military troops. The first repercussions of the Punjab poll were felt by air passengers.

D.E. Nizamuddin

IT'S A STONE'S UNWORLD

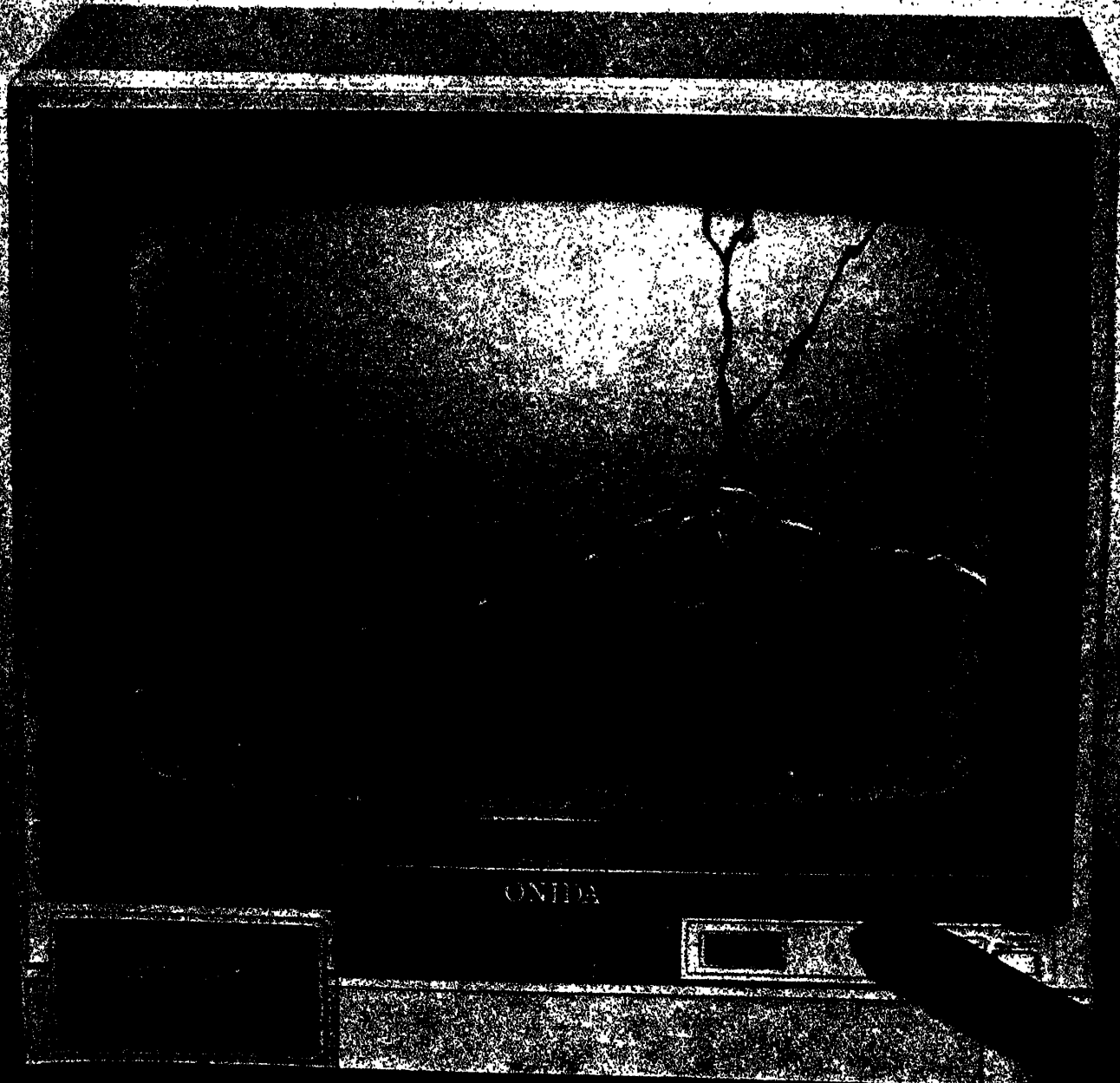
When you throw a stone at a colour TV, mortally wounding it, you might find your neighbours for the first time who may have seen your new ONIDA. And, armed with its classy, futuristic looks, the most astounding picture in colour, and the sharpest

picture they've ever seen on a TV screen! And have been deeply regretting the fact that they're stuck with colour TVs that are obviously a generation behind! You may of course argue, your neighbours are the nicest lot. Hardly the type to stoop to violence. No

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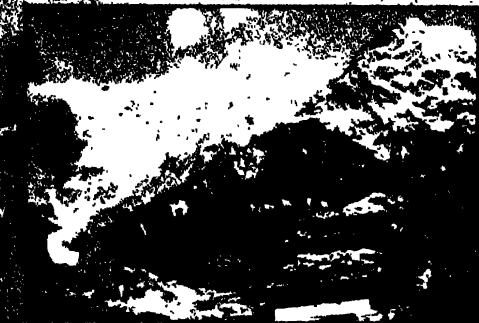
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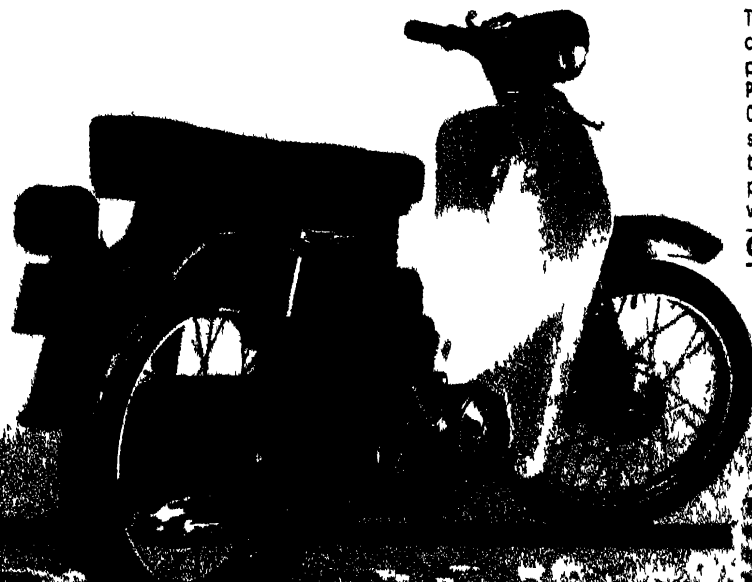
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